

Devotion

A Baby Kitten

Aliens/Predator

Complete



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Devotion

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This story was first published on September 15th, 2014, and was last updated on August 20th, 2015.

FicLab ID: SBRuA8lQ/ltyt528b/5zf00C5S

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Summary

title Devotion
author A Baby Kitten
source <https://www.fanfiction.net/s/10694820/>
published September 15th, 2014
updated August 20th, 2015
words 138,395
chapters 27
status Complete
rating Fiction M
tags Aliens/Predator, Complete, Drama, Fanfiction, Human, Movies, Predator/Yautja, Romance

Description:

When a failed chiva forces Yautja Prime's best to Earth to stop an infestation, an esteemed Veteran Prince finds himself a foe like none he had encountered before, an ooman female. Will he take her life or take her for himself? Rated M for explicit scenes and language.

Chapter 1

Thanks for reading! I've always enjoyed the Predator story lines, movies, comics and the video games included, so my story will include a lot of information from every Predator source with, of course, my own personal twist. I will include a little word guide that I use from the AVP wiki at the end of every chapter so you won't have to go back to see what each Yautja word means over and over again. This is my very first Predator fanfiction so I hope you enjoy it and thanks again for selecting Devotion!

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Dae'er did a final check of the supplies after the servants finished loading the ship. Afterwards, he loaded his weapons into their designated racks then readied the ship for departure. A distress call had been received from Earth, an ooman planet, the kv'var for a group of Young Bloods had taken a turn for the worse. The kiande amedha had spread like wild fire, escaping from the hunting grounds and into a highly populated ooman city. Earth was one of the largest human inhabited planets and an infestation that large would be impossible to control, a dha-viath. The sooner an esteemed group of kv'var-de could regulate the scourge, the greater chance they had at saving the planet. Dae'er was one of eight that had been called to the ka'rik'na. He had been instructed to lead the group by his sire, the king. He may be a prince but his reputation for being a revered sain'ja was well known all over Yautja Prime. He had cleared many kiande amedha dens, captured and killed many queens and had the th'syras to prove it. The elimination of hard meats weren't the only creatures he had grown his reputation from but from many kv'vars on planets known and unknown, he had a vast trophy room of hides and skulls to prove his worth and then some. He had also had a hand in capturing some bad bloods that had escaped exile and because of his experience in battle, it was no wonder he was the youngest male to ever reach Veteran title so early in his life.

"Prince Dae'er." Hunter Baguura approached him from the side. "Myself and the rest are ready when you are." Baguura was an esteemed Hunter, he had heard of the males ability to snipe targets as small as rodents from a mile away. With a threat as severe as the one on Earth, Dae'er was glad to have the hunter at his side.

Dae'er nodded in affirmation. "Sei-i, tell the others to board, we'll be departing immediately."

Dae'er turned from the male and headed to the cockpit. This ship was one of his own, not his best but it was well armored and still completely upgraded for a kv'var of this magnitude. He sat down in the control seat and readied the ship to jump galaxies. Earth was lightyears away from Yautja Prime and without the use of the galaxy jumper, it would take days to reach the planet. With no time to spare, getting there sooner than later would be the best call. The rest of his crew and the warriors entered the cockpit and took their seats, Dae'er started up his

ship and entered the gravitational pull of Yautja Prime. He had to wait before galaxy jumping to get authorization from the control center and for them to set him a clear path to avoid collision. The warriors aboard his ship were all males he had experience with. There were two Elites, Erkhchide and Raarg. Dae'er had cleared many kainde amedha dens with these two before and also had a good sparring with Raarg at the annual Sain'ja games. There was also Daine, a Brawler, a Vanguard soldier, Jorel, two Blazers who, if Dae'er remembered correctly, were sired by the same male and a Blooded male that Dae'er's brother, the Firstborn, had trained. Dae'er was unsure of the Blooded male but if his father had called him to the occasion then he must have potential. He didn't trust his Firstborn brother as far as he could throw him but he was a damn good kv'var-de so if he backed the young male, Dae'er supposed he could accept his protege on this excursion.

The males were quiet, even the brothers, and he could tell they were on edge about the distress call. Dae'er had gone to the rescue of many Young Blood males on failed kv'vars before but even he had to admit this one was somewhat unnerving. The male that had sent the call was in the middle of dying, his voice had strained to get out the message and at the end, the sound of his lungs filling with fluid came through crystal clear. Dae'er had no problem with ending the life of another for good cause, even the bad bloods who would never receive any mercy from him didn't phase him but listening to an innocent male's life come to an unhonorable end was enough to rattle even Cetanu's nerves he was sure. Every Young Blood male that was still alive on Earth had certainly failed his chiva and will no doubt be expected to end his own life. Any type of failure, whether it be on a kv'var or in a chiva or even when it came to mating with a female, was not tolerated and the male in question was expected to take his own life out of respect to his clan. One thing was certain, no Young Blood under his training would ever allow such an atrocity as the one on Earth to happen, Dae'er had thorough training with every one of his proteges and each male had moved on to succeed in astonishing achievements. If only every Elite and Veteran gave as much extensive training as he did, he wouldn't have to clean up after them as often as he had to.

The message that he was cleared for a galaxy jump came through and he secured himself and the other warriors into their seats in preparation for the jump. A trip that would take days would only take minutes, and he only wanted to finish this so that he could move on to his next kv'var, so the sooner the better. A panel closed off his view of space and his home planet then the lights on his console went dark as well as the lights in the cabin and the chirping of a monitor was all that could be heard. Every drop of blood and organ in his body shifted as his ship made the jump then the momentum slowed as the panel opened to reveal the blue and white colors of Earth. They were just past the planet's only moon as the ship came to a steady speed and entered the planet's orbit. He immediately turned on his ship's cloaking device so he wouldn't be detected by the oomans. Their technology was no where close to the Yautja's but they still monitored their galaxy, something as large as his ship would certainly bring chaos to such frail creatures. He could only imagine what they thought of the kainde amedha. He put in the coordinates from the distress call and his ship moved on auto pilot as he stood from his seat to equip his weapons and the rest of the males followed close behind him.

His ship landed in some sort of strange forest. The oomans had added paths and decor to the area. Such behavior was normal for oomans, destroying and ruining their planet for visual pleasure was ghastly in the eyes of Yautja. Dae'er couldn't believe the Young Blood males had been so careless in such a large area of oomans. The scent of ooman thwei was already heavy in the air and it didn't take long to locate the male that sent out the distress call. Dae'er

approached the male and examined him while the rest of his group had already spread out on the hunt for hard meats. The Blooded male remained at his side on high alert. Dae'er used his sabaton to turn the male over. He immediately switched the spectrum on his bio mask to see if he was infected with the hard meats young. A z'skvy-de born of Yautja would be a much more arduous encounter than he wanted to deal with right now. Fortunately and unfortunately, this male had met his u'sl-kwe at the hands of oomans, multiple ooman firearm holes were all over his body. Foolish oomans destroyed the only foe the kainde amedha had on their planet. Pyode amedha were such ignorant creatures, it was no wonder they were at the bottom of the food chain.

"He is with Cetanu now." Dae'er said to his companion. He gave the order to dispose of the body and the male quickly disposed of the dead with solvent, a highly potent chemical designed to destroy and eliminate any and all organic material. There was no reason to bring the corpse back to Yautja Prime as the male had no mark to prove he achieved his chiva, so it would only be a waste of space aboard his ship.

He opened his wrist gauntlet and did a sweep of the area for kainde amedha. A nearby ooman medical center lit up red, signifying that live hard meats were inside. He closed his wrist gauntlet and retrieved his ki-cti-pa from his back. He motioned towards the enormous medical center and the young male extended his wrist blades. Dae'er growled in aggravation, this was going to take longer than he had expected.

It's short, I know! But I do intend to post the next one very soon so bear with me! I intentionally didn't add Dae'er or the rest of the warriors name translations, those are for another chapter! :) Thanks for reading and see you soon!

Yautja Vocab (used in this chapter):

Ooman: Human

Kv'var: Hunt

Kainde Amedha: Hard meats or what we know as the creatures from Alien.

Pyode amedha: Soft meat or humans.

Dha-Viath: Disaster

Kv'var-de: Hunter

Ka'rik'na: A summoning of Yautja.

Yautja Prime: Yautja (Predator) home planet.

Sain'ja: Warrior

Th'syras: Skulls

Sei-i: Yes.

Cetanu: Yautja's equivalent to human's Grim Reaper.

Thwei: Blood.

Chiva: A trial for young blooded Yautja males in which they try to prove their worth to their clans in hopes to advance in the ranks.

Ki-Cti-Pa: Combi-Stick

z'skvy-de: The birth of a kainde amedha.

u'sl-kwe: Death or end.

Bio-Mask: The signature face and head armor of the Yautja, equipped with the ability to see in every vision mode including infared and x-ray. It also has zoom capabilities, a breathing apparatus, the ability to record sounds and sight, a translator and also controls certain devices used by the Yautja. It is also connected to the wrist gauntlet to gain access to other controls if the Yautja is somehow immobilized. The bio-mask is also sometimes decorated with writing or trophies by Elite and higher ranks of Yautja.

Wrist Gauntlet: A device with many functionalities including controlling most of the Yautja's equipment and weapons. It serves as a communication device, a self destruct function, their cloaking device and sometimes it controls special hand weapons.

Yautja Titles (some):

Bad Bloods: Rogue Yautja who have dishonored their clans.

Unblooded: A male Yautja who has not yet made his first kill.

Young Blood: A young Yautja male who hasn't completed his Chiva but has made a first kill.

Blooded: An Yautja male who has successfully completed his Chiva.

Blazer: An Yautja who uses a special Plasma cannon, Blazer Veterans can use dual plasma cannons and specialize in close up combat.

Hunter: Yautja who special in the Plasma caster, a handheld version of the plasma cannon, and attack from afar.

Brawler: Yautja with great agility and strength who only use their wrist blades in combat.

Vanguard: A heavily armored soldier of the King that uses a Plasma scythe for a weapon.

Elite: A highly experienced Yautja male who has completed his Chiva and also proved his worth by clearing multiple kainde amedha dens as well as successfully hunted other formidable foes of the Yautja.

Veteran: A highly respected title given to only those who have proved themselves in front of an Elder or the Yautja King. They have successfully hunted creatures of various threats and have significant honor and bravery.

Elder: A distinguished Yautja who has proven himself in battle and leadership. They are highly respected and looked up to.

Chapter 2

Chapter Two so soon! Chapter three is ready as well but I'm still doing some editing on it so look for it tomorrow! I didn't add the vocab this time since no Yautja language was used. Once again, thank you for choosing Devotion!

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The hospital had been over run with alien creatures. Monsters from a nightmare that were eating everyone they came across while some were being killed from parasites released by the aliens and they would explode out of the host's body. Erie Windall had never seen anything like this not even in the movies. The S.W.A.T team and the army had been annihilated while some of the remaining people in the building had managed to barricade one of the stair wells on a higher floor. Erie was luckily on that floor and she was certain the floors above them had done the same once they received the warning from the emergency room. Helicopters and emergency vehicle sirens could be heard outside but no one was able to do anything about the situation in here.

Erie looked out the window at the catastrophe happening out there. Some of the creatures were still funneling into the hospital and the military forces were doing their best to fend them off and kill them but it was no use. It was as if someone was opening semi truck after semi truck of the horrid monsters and unleashing them amongst the city. Some of the other staff and the patients had began praying as they believed it was the apocalypse. God had finally set his wrath upon mankind for everything they had done. Erie didn't know what was going on or why, all she knew was that the barricade wouldn't hold forever. Everyone in this hospital was going to die or become a carrier for more monsters.

The room she was in belonged to a man on life support. She thought the man was lucky for not being conscious to witness this massacre. She peeked back out into the hallway and saw the gathering crowd of survivors huddled inside the nurses station. Some had gathered any weapons they could find and was busy constructing homemade ones from medical equipment. The conversation of using the oxygen tanks to just blow themselves to smithereens was the talk of the hour. Erie, of course, didn't want to die, she had just graduated and began working here about six months ago. Her internship was almost over and she would become a full time nurse, why would she be ready to just suicide with a hospital full of aliens? She figured it was better than being eaten alive and had originally been sent into this room to retrieve the unconscious guys oxygen. She still was at war with her moral values on that one. This was someone's loved one, for Christ's sake. She wasn't even scheduled to work today but had been called in and if it wasn't for her struggle with the bills she would've hit that ignore button on her phone four hours ago.

She walked over to the machine that kept the man alive. She couldn't believe she was about to kill this guy so she didn't have to be alive while the rest of her was ingested. Part of

her thought she was doing the guy a favor but the other part felt guilty. After a moment she chuckled to herself, guilty for what? The man probably would've died anyway. She readied herself to flip the switch when a loud crash came from out in the hall. She ran over to the door to see the items that made up the barricade being thrown clear across the hall. This was it, she was going to be eaten, she immediately regretted not killing this guy sooner for the oxygen bomb. In a panic she shut the door and locked it. Screams and cries of help were loud out in the hall. One of the people slammed against the window begging her to let them in but he was immediately dragged off by one of the creatures. She was so terrified that her entire body was shaking and tears poured out of her eyes uncontrollably. What was she going to do? The window was out of the question as it didn't even open enough for a body to fit through, protocols for people trying to jump out of it. She didn't have time to try and break the three inch thick glass either. Those things would be in here any moment.

She heard the screeching of one of the monsters and quickly scurried into a tiny cabinet made for personal belongings. She was never a believer in God and the last time she stepped foot in a church was when she was a child but with her imminent death rapidly approaching, she suddenly found herself a believer. A huge impact against the door to the room she was in made her jump and she quickly covered her mouth with her hand to stifle her sobs. Why did she have to come into work today? Why? For some reason, the memory of her grandmother preparing Thanksgiving dinner when she was little came into her mind. The house was always warm and toasty and the aroma of the turkey baking in the oven engraved an unforgettable memory into her mind. The family would be watching the parade then the football game and while she found those things interesting, she preferred being in the kitchen with her grandmother. Sampling dishes as they came off the stove and out of the oven, topping the pumpkin pie with whipped cream and her favorite memory of all, peeling the skin off the turkey and eating it before anyone noticed. The crispy and savory delicacy being pulled away from the white breast of the juicy turkey was something she looked forward to, something that was cherished every year on that holiday. Right now though, that cheerful memory was betraying her as the only thing in her mind was the thought of her own skin being pulled off her body like she pulled the skin off the turkey's. An image she could've lived without.

Another loud crash and more screeching sounds. Why wasn't she dead yet? Maybe the others were putting up a fight with their homemade weapons. Maybe the army finally came through for them. Maybe, just maybe, she was about to be rescued. She waited and listened for any sound that didn't belong to a monster. Her sobs quieted down on their own at the hope of someone saving her. She pressed her ear to the door of the cabinet and listened through the steady silence that now filled the hospital floor. A moment later, a guttural gurgling sound came from right outside her cabinet. The door opened and she screamed at the top of her lungs. She braced herself to be lashed out at, ready to feel the fanged teeth of those monsters sink into her skin and peel it away like the turkey's. She closed her eyes and whimpered but nothing happened. No teeth, no skin peeling, no parasite wiggling it's way into her body. She slowly opened her eyes to see a massive different kind of monster staring down at her with a metal face.

It made clicking sounds as it stared at her and she pressed her body against the back of the cabinet wishing she could just melt into the wood. Before she knew what was happening, the monster reached into the cabinet, pulled her out by her hair and slung her onto the floor. She scrambled across the cold tile in an attempt to get away but a large heavy foot planted firmly

into her back interrupted her getaway. It turned her over and she begged the thing to not kill her, pleaded for it to let her go. It just stared at her for a moment and its black empty eyes flashed red then large, two foot long metal swords came out of its hand. Her recently discovered religion peaked again as she prayed out loud and begged this monster and God himself to spare her a horrid death. The creature raised its massive swords to kill her but when it brought it down another set of blades interrupted its fall.

Another monster like the one so adamant about killing her had..saved her? Her savior was twice as big as her executioner, it was at least a foot taller and it towered over the smaller one. His dreadlock like hair was black towards their roots and became a vibrant red about halfway down each strand. It wasn't until now that she realized their metal expressionless faces weren't faces at all but masks and her savior's was heavily decorated with spikes and unfamiliar symbols. The smaller one seemed upset about something, she guessed it was the bigger ones interruption of her death that had it infuriated. The bigger one simply took a step towards the smaller one and it cowed like a misbehaving dog.

They seemed to communicate via clicks and growls and Erie had no idea what they were saying, she just hoped one set of the words was "spare her". The smaller one gave off a snarl before spinning on its heel and exiting the room in a flurry of dissatisfaction. Erie watched as the small one began dragging off the body of one of the original monsters and she realized that these new monsters had killed them. Maybe all that praying to God paid off and these new creatures were some sort of angel. Her gaze returned to her savior, looming over her like a tall building. Its' eyes did the same red flash as the other one's and it crouched down to meet her face to face. She inched away from it on her palms as it stared right at her through the tinted eyeholes of its mask. Its hand reached out and grasped her under her chin. She immediately latched onto its thick burly arm with her tiny hands in an attempt to stop whatever it was trying to do but it did nothing. It tilted her head back and to the side before it let go of her. Her heart felt like it was about to burst out of her chest until it reached up with its clawed fingers and... stroked?...her hair. What was happening right now? Was it liking what it saw? Was it sizing her up as a meal? Had it never seen a human before? She was so lost and so confused on top of being scared to death, she had no idea what to feel right now.

The smaller one returned and they conversed a little more but the larger one kept its gaze on her while it did. The little one disappeared once more and the big one reached down with one hand and tossed her over its shoulder. She panicked and fought it tooth and nail, slamming her little fists against its reptile like skin but it was no use, its hide felt thicker than the rubber on a tire. Her assumption was confirmed when he kept walking unhinged by her feeble attacks and the hold it had her in didn't give her any more options to fight with. She tried to stiffen her body to raise up but it firmly planted its palm in the middle of her back to hold her in place. She shouted obscenities, she scratched at its back, she kicked her legs and she even tried to sink her teeth into it but it was no use. It wasn't even bothered by her as it went into the stairwell and hopped the railing to jump down three floors. It repeated the action until it made it to the bottom with a startled Erie still held over its shoulder.

As it entered the E.R., it walked more cautiously, checking and listening for something. Erie continued to spat out craziness and it wasn't until she spotted a shadow moving behind them that she shut up. She froze, petrified as one of the original monsters stalked from the shadows and charged right for them. Her savior reached beside her head and retrieved the tiny tube like stick it had attached to its back. She watched as the stick extended with a metallic

ting, turning into an enormous pole arm, like karate students would use but much more intricate. Her capturer spun around abruptly and knocked the charging monster into the wall with its polearm. The thing quickly recovered and leaped into the air, razor sharp talons ready to strike as it came at them. Erie was freaking out as she couldn't see what was happening. A moment later, her capturer set her down abruptly and Erie saw the dazed monster coming back at them. She frantically pointed toward the thing, trying to signal to her capturer that it was coming back. With its gaze still on her, it extended its wrist swords and spun around to slice the creature in half, clear down the center as it was mid air. Green acidic ooze poured out all over the floor and disintegrated tile and all.

The sound of more creatures echoed through the hallway, ear piercing screeching that had Erie crawling into a nearby room as her capturer collected its polearm. Its footsteps were heavy and resonating as it charged right for the source of the sound. It was crazy, this was crazy, she couldn't believe this was actually happening to her. She wanted to make a break for the front doors but God knows what the hell was out there. It could be far worse than in here and at least she had that huge creature to help her out. She crawled over to a supply cabinet and frantically pulled out all the materials to make room for her body. She couldn't see what was happening out there but she could hear everything. Every yelp of pain, every screech and roar, she was glad she couldn't see, thankful that it was dark and not in here. She climbed into the cabinet and shut the door. Who knows if her capturer would come back. It could be dead right now and she could be terribly alone, what then? Just hide in cabinets forever?

She waited what seemed like forever until the sounds were gone. All she could do now was wait and see if her capturer made it. The odds were slim since it was only it against massive amounts of them. Her thought was interrupted by her capturer pulling the cabinet door clean off its hinges. She screamed again. She wasn't sure why, a natural reaction to an unnatural situation even if it had already happened to her before. The clicking sound it made was a little unnerving but before it could reach in and yank her out she hastily crawled out. It reached down before she could get to the doorway and put her back over its shoulder. The sight of neon green blood trickling down a hole in its lower back had her stomach churning. It was injured but didn't seem affected by its wound.

They finally exited the building where police sirens blared out atop of empty cars, fire and debris were scattered all over the roads and sidewalk. It truly did look like the apocalypse was happening. Bodies upon bodies of creatures and humans were everywhere and she couldn't believe she had made it out alive. Off in the distance, she saw more military tanks moving towards the hospital and she kicked it into high gear to try get away from her capturer who seemed to be heading to take a stroll in the park. She wriggled her body around in its grasp and flailed around even more than she had before. She attempted to pull off the retracted polearm on its back but the thing was adhered on quite well. She managed a good swift elbow to the back of its head and it roared in reaction. It must've been fed up with her shit as it flipped her over its shoulder to body slam her into the grass. She wheezed out a ragged breath and cried out in pain. It crouched over top of her and stared at her with that menacing mask, she could almost see the "Are you going to behave?" face beneath the metal. Her one and only chance was blown, however, as it tangled its claws into her dark hair and dragged her to its destination. It was much more taller than her measly five foot two self so she hung over the grass in its grasp and her feet glided over the ground, barely making contact for any leeway in the strain on her scalp.

She shouted for help, screamed bloody murder for it until her lungs felt like they were shriveled into prunes but no help came and even if it did she was certain this thing would dispose of it no questions asked. They stopped and it dropped her hair and planted a foot on her tiny hand to keep her in place. She watched through watery pained eyes as it opened a panel on it's arm and typed something on it. It beeped like it was counting down and an enormous spaceship? It had to be a spaceship, of course it was a spaceship, blurred into view with a ramp already before them that led into the unknown. It dragged her up the metal grate and into a black room illuminated only by a few red lights along the edge of the floor. It opened a panel on a wall and pressed a button then something, she was sure of what it was, came out of the floor. A four by four black metal cage and instead of bars it had walls with hexagon shaped holes all over it. It pressed the pad of it's finger into a scanner and the cage door sprung open. It wasted no time in shoving her inside of it and slamming it closed. It growled then disappeared back out into the city.

She rattled the cage walls and messed with the scanner thing but it was no use. It was obviously controlled by only it's fingerprint and hers would never work. She sunk into the cage with her knees pulled into her chest. She would've rather died back there in the hospital than be abducted by aliens. She felt stupid for even considering that they could be angels, of course they weren't angels, they had freaking dreadlocks. Her life couldn't get any worse right now, first it was the acidic aliens and now the violently muscular aliens that seemed to want her for some reason. Probing? Experimentation? Some close encounters stuff that she didn't even want to think about right now. Maybe they were like the acidic ones but less feral and primitive, maybe they liked to season up their meal before eating it. Humans did it, why not aliens? Her scalp still hummed with the after effects of her romp through the park and this cage was no where near big enough to stretch out in. She really wished she would've stayed home now.

It felt like an hour before her capturer returned to its ship. This time, it brought friends. She couldn't really see very well with the poor lighting but she was certain at least six or seven friends plus her best friend, made eight gigantic comrades. All of them were no where close to being as tall as her capturer was but they were enormous all the same. Some would look her way while others acted as if she didn't exist, either way, it was scary as hell being in the same room as them. They all sat down in seats along the back wall of the room and her capturer sat in a seat in the middle of the room. The clanking sound of metal could be heard as a window opened to show the scenery out in front of the ship. They were getting ready to take off, she just knew it. She broke out the sobbing, begging and pleading again, one last go at trying to be set free. Her cries for mercy were interrupted as a loud explosion could be heard outside and it vibrated the metal floor beneath her. She recalled the beeping sound on her captor's arm. It had set a bomb, somewhere within the hospital she guessed and it just now detonated. She wasn't sure if she was thankful or regretted not being in the building just now.

She felt the ship move and she rolled into the back of the cage from the sudden momentum. Her capturer was speaking to someone in it's weird animal calls. She watched out the window as they ascended the sky, passing building tops and clouds and after a while of darkness she saw the curve of her home planet breaking the star speckled darkness of space with its atmosphere. She was in space, possibly farther than any human had been before and now at the mercy of these monsters. She was helpless now, hopeless even, there was no where to run, no one to run to and if she did, by some miracle, escape, how would she get home?

She'd never be able to fly this thing and if it had a fingerprint scanner for a cage, it certainly had some futuristic way of starting it's ship. No, she was definitely a prisoner now, a captive, an item in some future plans for sure. She only hoped it didn't involve anything sharp, boiling or painful. Why couldn't she have just stayed home..

Chapter 3

Chapter 3! I'd like to thank everyone that has taken the time to read, favorite, or review my work. It's like Christmas morning when I see someone has enjoyed my story! To the person that asked about the blocking: I've tried to separate the subjects of the paragraphs better so you don't get lost in reading! Please let me know if it has improved!

Once again thank you for choosing Devotion!

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The recovery of the failed kv'var was a success, gkei'moun. Dae'er and his group had sealed off the hunting grounds and killed every kainde amedha that had escaped or was z'skvy-de. Unfortunately, the ooman medical center had to be destroyed. There was too much evidence for solvent to be used and not enough time to get rid of every corpse. The oomans were flocking to the site like flies on the dead so using an explosive was the best option. His warriors were excellent combatants, not one had lost his life but some had wounds, even he had managed to get one. It wasn't from a hard meat however, but an unfortunate mishap upon a busted piece of ooman building material. A kainde amedha was lashing out at him, pushing him back as he used his dah'kte defensively. The terrible flooring of the ooman building refused to give him traction and thus the kainde amedha was able to shove him into a busted pipe of some sort. He'd certainly live but he added a new scar to his blanket of others.

His real prize from the excursion was the ooman lou-dte-kale. He'd seen many ooman females before but this one, she was different. The color of her ooman mane and skin was something he hadn't seen amongst her kind in centuries. He was certain she was rare or perhaps close to being the last of her kind. Unlike Yautja, oomans came in a hundred different varieties with characteristics that differentiate depending on where they originated on their planet. He had been to earth multiple times since it was first created, witnessed the birth of the oomans and every time he returned, evolution had added new kinds of oomans.

He was certain the one he had in his cage, that her race was close to extinction. When the oomans known as the Aztecs had come about, they weren't the only ones they had confronted with their plans of building hunting grounds. A race more north in a more fertile land was preferable, ones now called Native Americans. Back then, they went by many different names and while they seemed to have feuds amongst their own race, much like Yautja clans do, they also shared the Yautja's prideful demeanor. They had denied any right to build chiva grounds in their territory and claimed that the Yautja were a bad omen. They could've taken the Native Americans by force but that's not what they needed, they needed compliant and willing sacrifices for the temples, so that when the Young Bloods arrived there was already something to kv'var.

Not much time had passed since he returned to Earth but by then the oomans from the eastern part of their planet had invaded the Native American's territory and he himself had

never witnessed such a horrendous act of genocide. He personally found such acts of civil war foolish, why kill off numbers when you can increase them? Especially amongst a fragile kind such as theirs, where they rely prominently on quantity rather than quality. Just another piece of evidence towards the ignorance of the pyode amedha. By the time the light colored oomans had what they wanted, the Native Americans were already dwindling and as time went on they were bred out, only a few thousand Native Americans existed and most of those were only partially Native American. This one in his cage, however, was definitely full blooded, her prominent cheek bones, the signature nose, the dark hair and eyes and her copper skin all were proof of her lineage. There was no way to find out for sure. He could ask her of her lineage but he wouldn't know if she would tell him the truth and she already talked so much now, he could only imagine how much that would intensify if she knew he could understand her. He figured it was best to just go on his guess, for now.

He was cleared once more for a galaxy jump and he immediately set his ship for go. The ooman, of course, cried out in fear when the ship shut down for the pull of the jump. It was almost comical how easily they were frightened of the unknown. Bravery and courage wasn't their strong suit, he figured her being from the stubborn race he had encountered so many centuries ago, she could at least compose herself better. When the jump ended, he heard the familiar sound of an oncoming evacuation of the contents of one's stomach coming from the cage. He growled out of aggravation, maybe he had picked a terrible representation of the ooman race he favored so highly. The jump wasn't even that bad on the stomach, a little tingling sensation but not enough to vomit. S'yuitde.

He let autopilot guide him into the docking station and as soon as he landed, a flood of servants and staff came aboard his ship to clean and restock. The other males on his ship gave him the honorary na'tauk then hastily departed. They obviously wanted this to be over as fast as he did. He walked over to the cage and opened the door. The ooman tried to scramble out of it to get away from him but he swiftly grasped her by the back of the neck and stood her upright. She reeked of bile and the churned contents of her stomach but he still had to take her through customs and get her tagged. When he exited his ship, a customs worker was already awaiting him with a tablet in hand.

"N'jauka, your Majesty. I hope your kv'var was bountiful." The puny male worker tried to be respectful but Dae'er saw nothing respectable about males who became service workers. "I just need a bit of information on your pyode amedha before I can tag it."

Dae'er gestured for the male to continue as he headed for the cleaning station. "Very well. Age?" Dae'er didn't reply. The male continued to talk out loud about what he was filling in, the ooman's sex, the color of her mane and eyes, a guess of her height. He obviously knew Dae'er wasn't going to reply to him and the male was right. "Finally, do you intend to auction it off or claim it?" Dae'er stopped walking and both the ooman and the puny male stopped as well.

He wasn't quite sure what he wanted to do with her. She had shown signs that she was weak but her rarity kept him engrossed. It wasn't uncommon for Yautja males of the aristocratic society to keep oomans as companions, even females had them. Sain'jas, however, never kept something that could potentially slow them down and that's definitely what she would do. He'd have to keep tabs on her, make sure she was fed and nourished. The task seemed much more perplexed than he wanted to embark on and the entire planet would

be talking of him getting a pet. A warrior with a responsibility to another living thing? Absurd. But he wasn't just a warrior, was he? Besides, having the first living trophy would definitely be something at final meal to brag about.

"Claim." The male looked shocked but quickly dampened his bewilderment and filled out the form. Dae'er raised his wrist gauntlet for the male to scan with the tablet then he scanned a tagging gun with the tablet. When the light on the gun flashed a green ready light, the male lifted the ooman's sleeve and fired the gun off into her bicep. She winced and continued to ask questions about what they had done to her as she dabbed away the few drops of blood from the embedded tag.

The male scanned the ooman's arm and when he was satisfied with the successful scan on his tablet he gave a delighted trill. "You're set to continue. Thar'n-da s' yin'tekai." The male said as he rushed off towards another landing ship.

Now that the ooman female was officially his responsibility, he needed to have her cleaned. Not only did she smell of her own regurgitation but any contaminants from that ooman medical center needed to be washed away immediately. The cleaning station was new to him, a place he'd never gone before so he was interested to see what exactly they do to the oomans and other creatures that came through customs. He entered the lobby of the station with a squirming ooman in his grasp. A female came from behind a glass wall with yet another tablet in her hand. The female immediately recognized him as her Prince and she checked herself, prominently showing herself as an eligible female. He snarled in displeasure, signaling to her that he was merely here on business and had no interest in her whatsoever. Her demeanor relaxed and she switched from potential mate to professionalism.

"N'jauka, your highness. What services can we do for you today?" She asked as she readied to tap in on the tablet whatever he requested.

He had no idea what they offered and there was no sign or list to choose from that was visible. "What are the options?" He asked in annoyance.

"Would you like a bacterial cleaning?" She asked.

"Sei-i." He replied.

"Ooman claw trimming?" She asked again.

"Sei-i." He answered.

"Mane preserver? Skin replenishment? Marking removal? Excess hair buffing? Teeth cleaning? A vitamin boost? Would you like us to clothe her in appropriate companion clothing?" Her questions fired off quickly and he could barely try and guess what each procedure would be.

"Sei-i, Sei-i. Sei-i to it all." He said impatiently. The female was obviously getting her revenge on him turning her down but he didn't want her to refuse or mistreat his ooman because of it. Spiteful bitch.

She went around the wall and retrieved a collar and lead but before she clasped it around his wriggling oomans neck, she stopped to ask about one more procedure. "Would you like us to perform a chronological cessation?" She asked.

Now that was a procedure he was familiar with. Oomans aged faster than Yautja and a chronological cessation would prevent them from aging beyond the age they are when the procedure was performed. It perfectly preserved her organs and skin exactly the way they are now but they still functioned normally. The time around her would change but her body would remain frozen in time. Most Yautja had this done as they liked the idea of the same companion for life and after he no longer existed, his companion would be killed and placed to rest with his body. A companion in life and in death. He thought it was cruel to extend someone's life beyond their wishes but he also didn't want his trophy to decay and wanted it to be available whenever he wanted it. He nodded at the female worker and she tapped in something on the tablet then scanned his ooman's tag followed by his wrist gauntlet. He watched the tablet take funds from his bank then a receipt appeared on his gauntlet's screen. He couldn't believe how much this all cost him, an entire kv'var worth of coin to treat his ooman was just insane. Fortunately, he was a wealthy sain'ja and could afford a thousand of these procedures as often as he liked.

He removed his hand from around the ooman's neck and the female quickly clasped the collar on. It was obvious she had experience with fleeing oomans with the speed she had in fastening the lead. He watched as she dragged his ooman off kicking and screaming into the room separated by the glass wall. She yanked the lead over top of a small stall and fastened it to the wall. The ooman looked even more afraid than she did on Earth as her clothes were stripped away and three workers lathered her up with an orange cleaning solution. He could hear her high pitched protests through the thick glass as they scrubbed and washed every inch of her body. After they rinsed her, they clamped a device on her hands and filed down her ooman nails before they removed the varnish off of them, they repeated the process on her feet then they brought out an abrasive sponge like item.

Oomans enjoyed permanently covering their bodies with trivial markings, pictures and symbols that meant nothing and his ooman seemed to have participated in such a ritual by having a hyu-swei, a human insect, marked on her upper shoulder blade. The workers were rough as they scrubbed off the marking, blood streamed down the ooman's back and the continuous flowing water at her feet quickly washed the crimson liquid away. His ooman was beside herself as she cried and sobbed in pain, drool pooled from her mouth and he watched as the dtai'kai'-dte in her began to weaken. The workers slathered a salve over the place where the marking was then unhooked her from the wall and dragged her weak body over to a vat of brown ooze. Steam rolled off the top of it and one of the male workers lifted his ooman over his shoulder and threw her into it. Her body thrashed around violently, getting the goo everywhere then they quickly removed her and placed her in another vat of something green. This time they eased her into it upto her neck and kept her in it for a few minutes. When they brought her out, every hair below her head was completely gone, he never understood ooman's need for hair on their bodies, a trait evolution had failed to get rid of it seemed.

They sprayed her off again then forced her onto a table and strapped her down. They started up the tube shaped machine and his ooman was pulled inside of it. A bright yellow light flashed then a red laser started at her feet and scanned all the way up her body then another yellow flash went off and the table slid out of the tube. At first, his ooman wasn't moving then she began to z'skuy-de wildly. He felt panic but the workers didn't seem too worried about it as they injected her with something. Her spasms ceased instantly and they unstrapped her and moved her to another table. There, they poured a wax like substance all

over her dark mane and left her lying there. The same female with her tablet came over to him and held it up for him to look at it.

“These are our selection of companion coverings. The package you paid for allows you to pick from any of these.” She said scrolling down the list of pictures.

Dae’er didn’t know which one to choose, he couldn’t care less. He shook his head in annoyance then just selected whatever one his claw landed on. The female arched her brow at his choice then went back into the room and retrieved the coverings from a drawer. He watched as she dressed his companion with a breast covering made of a soft thin leather. It barely left anything to the imagination. When he saw the covering for her female parts, he was more satisfied with his choice as it covered the entire area. After dressing his ooman, the female worker took a comb and raked it through his ooman’s mane, pulling out the dried wax until her mane was soft and dry again. One of the worker males lifted his unconscious female and brought her to him. He laid her over his shoulder and the worker female relayed some instructions to him.

“It won’t be long before she wakes up. The vitamin boost will sustain her for quite a while but as you and I both know, good solid sustenance does the body well and I suggest bringing her back for a new one if you decide to take her on a kv’var or if you leave her behind with a caretaker. Her skin will be sensitive for a day or so and if the spot where her marking was doesn’t seem to be healing correctly you can apply a restorative salve as needed. Since protocol forces me to say this, if you feel like you can’t handle your ooman companion please take her to your nearest auction house and they will take care of her for you but by doing so you are relinquishing your right to the ooman indefinitely. On that note, thank you for choosing customs cleaning station, n’dhi-ja.” The female worker went on the other side of the wall to tend to other oomans and creatures leaving him with his sleeping ooman.

It was on his walk back to his domicile that he realized he had no idea how to train or care for a ooman. He knew how to dismember them and gut them but not how to keep them alive. Pauk, what had he gotten himself into. He went straight into his bed chamber and laid the ooman in his bed. He wondered how the other Yautja kept their companions. Did they allow it to sleep in their bed or did they have a place to keep them? He needed a shower himself as he still reeked of the ooman planet and the kainde amedha. He made sure his bed chamber was locked as he headed for his wash room. He didn’t know how much longer she’d be asleep for and he couldn’t risk her escaping. Even if it was his first time owning an ooman, the rest of his kind would still look down upon an untrained ooman wandering freely among them and he had a reputation to uphold. Until she willingly obeyed him, he’d have to get an electromagnetic collar to keep her at his side. He’d have his servant bring him one immediately.

He removed his awu’asa and placed all the pieces on their designated racks to be cleaned. He examined the wound on his lower back and noticed that it was already clotting and healing on its own so there was no need for a salve. His bathing room consisted of a large hot pool with a waterfall cascading into it for showering. There was no need for soaps or solutions since Yautja didn’t produce putrid body odor but a good rinse was always satisfactory. The steaming hot water was incredible on his over worked muscles as he lingered in the waterfall with a watchful dekna on his bed chamber for any movement from the ooman. His mind was focused on his next kv’var, a planet of G’eru, large pachyderm like

creatures that had massive tusks perfect for making intricate furniture out of, was his next destination. The creatures were enormous, worthy prey and an excellent test of his skills. Not only would he have to track them but their incredible speed was always a challenge that he enjoyed taking on. While the kainde amedha were good practice targets, they were nothing compared to some of the prey he preferred. He planned on leaving as soon as his ooman adjusted, which he hoped would only take a day or two.

Something moved in his peripherals and he watched as his ooman fell out of his bed and made her way to a rack of his trophy weapons. He let out a low growl of displeasure, maybe this adjustment would take longer than he thought. He moved slowly out of the pool and stalked his way over to the door. His room was dimly lit according to ooman deknas but to his infrared ones, it was lit up like day time. Her small hands fumbled with the sharp weapons, trying to select one that she believed would fulfill her purpose. He couldn't help but chuckle at her choice. There, right in front of her, was a sivk'va-tai, a weapon that good evaporate him completely, and she chooses a ceremonial dagger. In her defense, the weapon looked a dah'nagara in her tiny hands but still, it was comical. He opened his wrist gauntlet and shut off the lights in his bed chamber completely, no red dimmer lights, no emergency lights, nothing but the pitch of darkness. Her immediate panic and fear triggered his hunter instinct and his ears adjusted to listen to her every breath, every step her feet made and every beat her small frantic heart took echoed in his ears. Every one of his senses focused on her. He didn't have his bio-mask but he was still able to calculate her inexperienced reactions with the dagger. He decided to instill more h'dlak in her as he let out a guttural trill from his throat.

Her small body turned to face the wrong direction with the dagger pointed straight out. A foolish move. He moved like a cat as he strode silently over and retrieved the dagger with ease from her grasp. She gasped and backed away from where she thought he was but he was already behind her as he clasped his hand over her mouth and held her against his body, keeping her from moving away from him. She whimpered and whined at his restraint on her and he whispered near her ear in Yautja.

"S'yuitde lou-dte kale." Her body stiffened from his brash voice.

He didn't know her ooman language and didn't care to but his bio-mask could easily translate everything he said to her and what she said to him. He didn't have it on at the moment but he figured it was for the better since she seemed to have calmed herself when he spoke to her. He let go of her body and she collapsed on the floor at his feet. Her eyes tried to focus on him but failed in the darkness. He watched as she scrambled backwards until she found his bed then climbed up and covered herself with one of the large furs. She was speaking to him but it all sounded like gibberish, unintelligible blabber that was monotonous and repetitive. He ignored her as he picked up his freshly cleaned and polished awu'asa from the rack and suited up. When he placed his bio-mask on, her prattle became clear.

"What are you going to do with me?" Was a frequent question. As well as, "Are you going to eat me?". He had come to discover that this ooman's wild assumptions were hysterical. If she were more thoughtful in her thinking process she'd know that he would never invest as much time as he had in bringing her to his home planet then having all of those procedures done just to consume her flesh. At this point, she was making a worthless trophy.

He turned the lights back to their original state and he changed the spectrum on his bio mask to a ooman's point of view. She was attractive in this spectrum, her black hair glistened

a shade of brown under the light and her tanned skin was admirable. What he was fond of the most was the shape and color of her eyes. They were roundish, almond shaped, big and bright with a solid shade of rich soil colored brown. Her lips were plump and a vibrant shade of reddish pink but were turned into a frown at the moment. Her fear of him was so disappointing, she had not one visible hint of gratitude for saving her from the kainde amedha. Not only had he spared her life from the hard meats and his blood crazed associate but he had extended it. Given her the gift of youth which by his memory was something oomans had been wanting since the dawn of their existence. In fairness, she wasn't aware of the last part but still she had to feel rejuvenated in some way. Even he could tell that her color and health had improved significantly.

"Your name." His translator filtered his Yautja language and changed it to hers but kept the sound of his voice the same.

She looked stunned that he spoke to her. She stuttered a moment and he growled with impatience. "Erie." She shrieked. "Erie Windall." Her name actually meant something in Yautja and made things even more humorous than they already were.

"Your name is fruit." One thing the translator failed to do was recognize a question. Instead, it came out as a statement. His words caused bewilderment to come onto her face. He tried again. "Your name means fruit."

Now she was a little insulted even though he didn't mean for it to sound negative. This was the pride he favored so much in her race. The honor she held for her name was the same as the Yautja's, even their naming ceremonies were similar. Her eyes stared at him with remorse and he found her even more pleasing to look at with this new emotion. He chocked it up to instinct since Yautja females usually acted angry towards Yautja males all the time, to them, it was a sign that she was interested in him. If the female showed no emotion towards a male, it was a blatant sign that she had no feelings for him whatsoever. Anger, anger was more than welcomed.

"My name doesn't mean fruit." She barked and his tresses twitched at the animosity from her. 'It stands for "Long Tail" or "cat".' She followed up.

Cat. She definitely didn't have the features of a cat creature nor did she have the characteristics of one. He couldn't help but wonder what the elder was thinking when they selected her name. He supposed it was better than fruit, but he would never address her by the Native American pronunciation of her name. Instead, he would use the Yautja term for cat. It was an inappropriate name for a companion but he had respect for her race and would bite the bullet if anyone questioned his name for her.

"No'elia." He said, cutting off the translator. She looked at him confused. 'Cat.' He replied turning the translator back on. He had added the "a" at the end to make it more feminine. She tried to say the word and failed at the dialect but it was close enough. "Your name." He said firmly.

She stared at him blankly but at least she wasn't trying to dtai'kai'-dte him anymore. He turned and headed for the front of his domicile to instruct a servant to bring him an electromagnetic collar for his ooman when she stopped him. He turned to face her and she jumped out of his bed to stand in front of him.

“What do I call you?” She asked timidly.

He cocked his head to the side. It was inappropriate for her to refer to him by his title or his name since she was not Yautja and only one word came to mind that was suitable for her to call him by. The word would be demeaning to her but she never had to know what it meant and she would still be abiding by the expected obedience a companion should have.

“N’yaka-de.” He said in Yautja without the translator.

She stuttered out the word inaccurately and he corrected her until she finally got it perfectly. Of all of his titles, of all the words he’d been called over his lifetime, this one was the only one that irked him. It didn’t feel right, hearing it pronounced with her melodic tone of voice seemed out of place. Such a demeaning word tainted that sweet soprano resonance like venom in the flesh. It needed to be sucked and spat out until it was immaculate again but what could he do? It was what was proper of her and what was expected of him. He was her master and she was his no’eli, a pet.

Yautja Vocab:

Ooman: Human

Kv’var: Hunt

Kainde Amedha: Hard meats, Xenomorphs, or what we know as the creatures from Alien.

Pyode Amedha: Soft Meats, humans.

Gkei’Moun: Easy, simple.

Z’skvy-de: Xenomorphs born from a human, chest burster.

Dah-kte: Wrist Blades

Lou-dte-kale: Female, child bearer.

S’yuitde: Pathetic

Na’tauk: Salute

N’jauka: Greetings, Welcome, Hello

Sain’ja: Warrior

Thar’n-da s’ yintekai: Strength and Honor.

Sei-i: Yes/affirmative.

Hyu-swei: Butterfly/Insect

dtai’kai’-dte: Fight/Battle

z’skuy-de: Convulse/Spasm

N’dhi-ja: Farewell, Goodbye

Awu'asa: Armor

Dekna(s): Eye/Eyes

G'eru: Elephant like creatures

Sivk'va-tai: Plasma Caster

Dah'nagara: Shortsword

H'dlak: Fear

N'yaka-de: Master

No'eli: Cat/Feline

Chapter 4

Hello again! I hope no one minds the daily chapters, I've just had a ton of stuff flowing out! I'd like to thank everyone who reviewed, favorited and followed me, it always makes my day to see the alert of a new friend :) I hope this chapter is satisfying for you guys and once again, thank you for choosing Devotion!

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Her captor had said something to what she thought was some sort of butler and it wasted no time in departing from the enormous apartment like house. The place was huge and was the epitome of vaulted ceilings. The roof was made of glass and a strange dark orange colored sun shined into the living room area. It was no where near as bright as Earth's but gave off just enough light to be considered dim. There was a couch made of what looked like ivory and leather and cushioned with fur. In fact, most of the furniture was made of fur and leather. Skulls of every shape and size, human and not, made up the crown molding. The whole place looked similar to a hunting lodge except instead of wood cabin walls there were black metal walls instead. So, a futuristic hunting lodge? Aside from the skulls, she had to admit it was a little cozy. It even had a giant hearth with a large blue fire flickering inside of it.

She timidly walked over and sat down on the couch but when she went to lean back she winced at the contact on her scrubbed off tattoo. That whole experience in that weird alien spa was traumatizing. She was certain she would have post traumatic stress after this whole experience was over, if it ever ended that is. She couldn't believe they actually scrubbed off her tattoo, skin and all. Not to mention the weird baths that somehow evaporated all the hair off her body. She'd never been one for going bald eagle but the feel of the smooth leather underwear did feel quite amazing against her bare skin. Come to think of it, she didn't remember putting this weird outfit on. She looked down at the straps that made up her top. It looked more like a harness than a shirt as the only thing covered were her nipples.

She guessed that being eaten could be ruled out since he gave her a name. No'elia. His word for cat. What was that weird name he wanted her to call him? N'yaka-de? She'll have to say the word over and over again to remember it.

The sound of the door opening drew her attention from thinking and she jumped up to see the butler returning with something in his hands. It looked like, she narrowed her eyes to get a good look, a collar. Her heart sank into her stomach and the memory of that horrid monster woman leashing her up like a dog, came into mind. There was no doubt that the collar was intended for her. She watched as the butler showed N'yaka-de how to set it up with his weird wrist computer and once they were done, N'yaka-de headed right for her with the opened collar.

"Come." He instructed to her, like a dog! Like hell she was. She backed away and prepared to dash for an opening. He tried again to coax her over to him. "Come, No'elia.

Cooperate and it shall go smoothly.” Not in her book. A collar? Really? Was this guy into weird BDSM or something? Whatever his cup of tea was she wasn’t about to take a sip from the same edge. She sprinted off in front of the fireplace, heading for a set of double doors.

He took two giant leaps and caught her by the straps of her harness top, dragging her to the floor. The part that wrapped around her neck got tugged tight and choked her into submission. He realized exactly what was happening and tightened his grasp on her top, squeezing the shit out of her neck. After a few moments of no air, her eyes felt like they were going to pop and only when she managed to wheeze out a raspy “please” did he let go. Her lungs were dying of thirst as they gulped in breaths of air. Holy shit. This guy wasn’t messing around, he was dead set on collaring her even if it was on her lifeless body. ‘Alright.’ She wheezed. “I’ll cooperate.” He slammed the collar around her slender neck and closed it until it was tight like a choker. Every time she swallowed the collar struggled to stop her from doing it. Great. She had managed to piss him off yet again and now she was stuck with a too tight collar. He grabbed her by her neck and pulled her close to his side.

He spoke in clicks and growls to the butler and the butler replied. He looked down at her, nodded towards the butler then sternly said, “Go to him.” She gave him a look of confusion then he nudged her with his hand. She grunted in annoyance then headed for the butler on the other side of the room. Her path was immediately blocked by some invisible wall. She looked back at N’yaka-de for instruction but he gave none. She pressed her body up against the force shield and ended up moving in a perfect four foot radius around N’yaka-de. She could extend her legs and arms beyond the space but her neck seemed to be the only thing restricting her from going any further. It was the collar, it was somehow tethered to N’yaka-de and kept her at his side.. like an electric fence..for dogs.

This new situation hit her hard. It was definitely a blow to her humanity. Not the invasion on earth, not the abduction, not the rough housing or even the spa day in hell. It was this. His intentions for her were finally clear. She was his pet, something to feed treats to and pet every now and then except she couldn’t live in ignorant bliss like the household pets on Earth did. She had to live knowing that she was a slave, doing what she was told or else she would be violently punished. She burst into tears and sank down the invisible wall to her knees. The room was completely quiet except for her pitiful sobbing.

“There are rules you will follow.” N’yaka-de said still using his serious voice.

She wiped her snotty nose. “Rules?” She asked wearily.

“Outside of this domicile, you will not speak to me. Your gaze will remain on either me or the floor.” As he instructed her, she looked up from her spot and gave him a sorry and dejected look. ‘You are my companion. You belong to me. You don’t talk unless I tell you too. You don’t eat unless I give it to you. Everything you do will be decided by me. Failure to obey will result in punishment.’ His voice raised little by little as he spoke and she found his angry tone frightening. She quickly nodded in agreement but it wasn’t good enough. “Do you understand?!” He roared at her. She found his treatment of her unnecessary, she had already stated she would behave why must he verbally abuse her? She nodded her head frantically. “Yes, N’yaka-de. I understand.” Her voice broke at the end and she quickly buried her face into her palms to weep.

The sound of the butler leaving didn't phase her but when N'yaka-de went on the move, the force shield gave her no choice but to jump up and follow him or else she would've been dragged. He exited the room, placed his hand firmly on the back of her neck and walked with her down the dark hallway. She did as he had instructed and kept her eyes on the floor. A metal grate made up the ground and the sound of the metal talons on N'yaka-de's shoes were loud and his footsteps heavy, almost like a ten ton robot was walking through the hallway. She didn't have to be looking to know that she was being stared at and it made her wonder why they were. Was N'yaka-de not supposed to have her or maybe she was doing something wrong. She swallowed hard and kept her gaze on her feet.

He strolled her around for a while before coming to a doorway that had metal detectors in front of it. Another monster was standing behind a fence like wall inside of the room and N'yaka-de was speaking to him. She wanted desperately to look into the room, to see what was going on. The sound of N'yaka-de's wrist computer chirping meant he was doing something with her again. The stranger in the room reached out and she flinched in preparation to be grabbed or shoved but he only scanned her arm where they injected her earlier. After that, N'yaka-de leaned down, took off her collar and whispered to her. "You will stay here until I come for you again. Do not leave this room." He said sternly as he nudged her past the metal detectors.

She quickly turned to see N'yaka-de departing from the doorway. She went to dash out of the metal detectors after him but the monster guarding the doorway extended his arm and clotheslined her. She looked up at the guy with a shocked expression while she backed away from the door.

"Yeah, that wouldn't be a good idea." Erie spun her head around to see a girl, another human, standing behind her. 'Hola.' She said with a thick Spanish accent. Erie scrambled in the opposite direction of the girl to the front of a couch. "I know, you want to be with your Master but going through the fence wouldn't be the way to do it unless you want a 1,000 volts of electricity to pass through your body. I mean, it's a good way to suicide if you can get past the babysitter there." The girl pointed at the guy who had just performed the perfect wrestling move on Erie then she grabbed a purple round object from a bowl and plopped down on the couch.

Erie looked around the room and saw about a dozen more girls, all of different ethnicities and shape and size. Most of them looked Latino. Couches lined every inch of the walls and some had sleeping girls on them while the others were just sitting, patiently waiting for something. A cart with a glass barrel of water and small bowls to drink from adorned the center of the room. Side tables between each sofa had a bowl of strange looking, what she assumed, was fruit. No one seemed to even notice Erie as they whispered among each other. Where the hell was she? A human daycare center?

"Are you going to hang out on the floor all day or what?" The girl said as she peeled off the violet skin of her fruit. Erie watched as she glanced at her. "As someone who has personally witnessed what's been on that floor and how often feo here has cleaned it, I advise against lingering there for much longer."

Erie took the girl's advice and climbed up onto the sofa beside her. "Where are we?" Erie asked.

The girl had short frizzy hair that was pulled up in a poofy ponytail and light brown freckles that covered her nose and cheeks. Her leather outfit was more of what Erie wanted, a mini skirt and a one shoulder tank top. The girl gave her an estranged look that quickly shifted to realization. "Straight from the home planet, huh? Tenemos un salvaje uno." The girl said in Spanish and some of the other girls flocked over to where they were.

A lot of them immediately bombarded her with questions, mostly about pop culture. Who was the most popular music artist? What the fashion was like. What celebrities had died. Movies, food, video games and everything else Erie herself wasn't even sure about. One girl even asked if McDonald's still existed. She couldn't help but wonder exactly how long they had been here. The monster at the door let out a loud grunt and the girls quickly dispersed.

"What was that about?" She asked the original girl.

"It's been a while since a girl straight from the gran canica azul has been here." The girl said as she bit into the fruit and a thick purple jelly oozed down her chin.

"Is there somewhere else that human girls come from?" Erie asked suspiciously.

The girl laughed showing off a mouthful of purple pulp. "Mamasita, every girl in this room aside from you came from," She swallowed then used her free hand to spread across the air like a banner. "the auction house."

Erie gave her a confused look as her brain tried to imagine exactly what her definition of an auction house was. The girl shot her a look of disbelief. "It's where guys like him," She nodded towards the monster at the door. "Can get himself a little humana coño. Ever see all of those missing people posters? I'd say about 1 in 10 were actually missing, the rest were brought here. Beaten and trained into obedience so these monstruos have the perfect little chihuahua. Those that can't handle it or refuse to become a dog are executed like one." The girl made a gun out of her fingers and put it to her temple.

Erie couldn't believe that there was an actual space trade of humans. specifically trained to be a pet to these aliens. She looked around the room again at the girls and they did seem to be well behaved, all except for the girl that was explaining all of this to her. She finished her fruit and reached over into the bowl and pulled out another. Erie couldn't help but to feel like she had it easy, what these monsters must've done to these poor girls was unnerving. She thought how N'yaka-de had treated her thus far was scary, she could only imagine what a bunch of these guys did to every one of these girls. She pondered about how she tried to run from N'yaka-de and her blow to his head back on Earth, could those have been reasons for him to kill her? What exactly was considered a fatal act of disobedience? Maybe her view and actions towards the situation was incredibly careless.

Three girls walked over and stared down at Erie. She did her best to avoid looking at them but they were practically in her face. She glanced up at the middle girl who gave her a disgusted look. She was Latino, with short straight hair that came to about her shoulders and she was missing her top. The piece that covered her bottom might as well have been missing as the one inch thick strip could hardly be called a covering. "So you're from Earth?" She said with a bitchy tone in her voice.

Erie cleared her throat. "Uhm, yes." She really didn't want any trouble and these girls seemed to be looking for it.

She said something in Spanish and the other girls rolled with laughter. “So what did you do to hook such a jefe of a master?” One of the other girls made a provocative gesture with her mouth and the other ones nodded in agreement.

“Are you serious right now, Dana? Why don’t you and your slut squad go back to talking about whose Master has the tiniest pene some more?” The girl on the couch barked as she made a pinching gesture with her fingers.

“Aw, Seleana, you going lesbiana on us are you?” Dana said and Seleana flashed her a threatening eye.

Erie wanted to go to the corner of the room and just blend in with the decor. She was never good with confrontation and always ended up on the wrong side of the jokes. She felt like she was in high school all over again. Erie went to slink off the couch when Dana reached out and pulled a lock of her hair up to her nose.

“She got the Princesa Package, ladies. Smell her hair, like roses on a pile of mierda.” Dana said as she tossed Erie’s hair behind her shoulder. “Only a master above Elite can afford such a treatment. She probably bagged herself an Ancient like poor little Seleana here.” The girls laughed at every joke Dana made, like she was the most hilarious person that ever existed. Erie didn’t go through four years of college to be thrown right back into a clique pool.

“Ignorante perras. Did you even bother to look at her Master? He’s one of the Príncipes.” After Seleana finished her remark, the other girls faces went from ‘bitchy’ to “oh shit”.

Erie wasn’t too sure of what Seleana had said but the look on the other girl’s faces confirmed that N’yaka-de was indeed someone of importance. The girls quickly became uninterested in Erie as they frowned and shuffled off to the other side of the room in a hurry. She had a million questions for Seleana and hoped she had the answers to them all.

“My master, who is he?” She asked as she watched Seleana begin to devour her new piece of purple fruit.

“His father is the king of these aliens. He’s not as important as his brother, the Firstborn, but he is still important.” She replied.

A prince? She had been kidnapped by a prince?! She felt like she was in some sick fairy tale story. Prince Charming rescues the damsel in distress but instead of living happily ever after or returning her to her people he kidnaps her and turns her into his lapdog. She wondered why he was on Earth killing those acidic aliens to begin with. Why would a prince be sent to the front lines? There was obviously more to her Master than she thought.

“These, creatures, what do they call themselves?” Erie asked.

The girl laughed. “What do they not call themselves? They’re so egotistical and self absorbed. Always finding ways to be better than the male next to him. Yautja is the name of their kind but they call themselves warriors, hunters, conquistadores del universo, you name it and that’s what they are.” Erie watched as Seleana stood and went over to the water barrel, picked up one of the wooden bowls then filled it with water.

She brought it over to Erie and held it out for her. “So what’s your name? Most of these girls have the same name, just like dogs do. There’s probably five Dana’s in here, three or four Seleana’s. So what original name did you end up with?”

Erie reached out and took the small bowl. “No’elia but my human name is Erie.” She replied.

“Fruit?” The girl found the name as interesting as N’yaka-de had. ‘Your name in Yautja means fruit. That’s kind of funny.’ Seleana said as she fixed her own bowl of water. “No’elia though, that’s different. I’ve never heard that one before. In fact, I’ve never heard the word at all. I’ll have to ask my n’yaka-de what it means.”

“Your master’s name is N’yaka-de, too?” Erie exclaimed.

Seleana laughed even louder this time. “No, girl, n’yaka-de means master in Yautja.” Seleana leaned back against the couch with a hand on her forehead. “Oh my god, you’re funny. My master’s name is U’t’h’ri, he’s an Ancient which means he’s over a thousand years old. I’ve been with him for a very long time, I think about 300 Earth years now.”

Erie’s jaw dropped. “How have you lived this long?”

“Chronological cessation. Apparently the Yautja invented the fountain of youth.” She laughed again. ‘In all seriousness though, it’s a process that basically makes you live forever. You’ve had it done too, here let me show you how you can tell.’ Seleana said as she set her bowl down then picked up Erie’s hand. “See this?” She asked showing her one of her fingernails. Erie looked closely and barely saw a white line at the bottom of each of her nails. “That’s where the cessation began. Your nails will never be any longer than they are now. Same thing with your hair so no more having to shave your legs!” Seleana said.

She seemed awfully chipper to have such a huge thing done to her body. Erie was up in the air about it. She’d never get old, never experience any natural changes beyond the age of 22 or be able to change her hair. Luckily, it was down to the middle of her back or she would’ve been upset. She supposed there were benefits to it like not having to shave or deal with wrinkles but why? Why did the Yautja, her master, need this done to their humans? It was obvious that they wanted to keep them past their expiration dates but it had to be more than that right? It couldn’t be just so they lived longer.

“Well, my ride’s here.” Seleana said as she stood up from the couch.

Erie looked over at the doorway to see a decorated Yautja with a long black cape and it’s dreadlocks heavy with silver rings. It looked much older than any of the Yautja she had met so far. Seleana turned to her before heading for her master who was busy talking to the babysitter Yautja.

“See you tomorrow, fruit.” Erie watched as the tall slender girl got her arm scanned then walked through the metal detectors for her master to place a hand on the back of her neck in the exact same way her own master did. Seleana flashed her a smirk before averting her eyes to the floor.

Erie had a lot of questions for her master and even more for Seleana. There was a lot her master hadn’t told her, maybe he didn’t want her to know or thought that it didn’t matter but to Erie, it did. Just the mention that her master was a prince had scared off those crazy Latino girls, she could only imagine what other power her master had over his own kind.

Her master was gone a long time before he came to get her. As soon as she saw him at the door she jumped up and tried to get to him. The babysitter Yautja quickly shoved her to the

ground. He raised his hand like he was going to backhand her and she immediately covered her face in preparation for the incoming blow. A loud growl from her master quickly changed the babysitter's attitude and he reached down and pulled her to her feet gently. He scanned her arm then shoved her through the metal detector. She hastily tucked her body behind her master and after he gave the babysitter a good long hateful gaze he set his hand on the back of her neck and led her down the hallways to his apartment.

She was thankful that he didn't immediately slap on the collar even when they got to his room. She hopped up in the bed and nuzzled into the furs. She peeked out from under a fluffy white hide and watched as her master fumbled with his armor pieces. He was clumsy and his movements were slow. She didn't recall him being this careless earlier, why was he now? She watched as he went to take a step towards the weapon rack to take off his wrist swords and stumbled slightly. It was almost as if he were... no..no way..him? The prince was intoxicated and clearly well beyond a slight buzz. She couldn't help but stifle a giggle. That was why he took so long in coming to get her from the daycare, he was busy getting plastered.

"I am tired." He mumbled out. "I plan on going on a hunt soon and I need to be well rested." He said slurring slightly.

He must've been talking about going to get more skulls for his wall. Even though he was turning out to be quite scary, she had to admit that his body armor was pretty amazing. A heavy shoulder piece that draped over a majority of his left bicep and just the top of his right shoulder, came off first and was set onto a rack. He removed his greaves then his belt followed by the bracer on his right hand but he kept the wrist computer on his left. He continued this process until all he had on was a leather loincloth and his mask. She saw the other Yautja without a mask on and wondered if he looked as terrifying beneath his as they did. She watched in awe as he pulled off the decorated mask slowly, air hissing as it broke away from another part that was attached to his head. He set the mask on a rack then turned to face her.

She gasped and covered her mouth with her hand in shock. He didn't look the same as the others, he was much more intimidating. His mandibles moved around his fangs as he watched her reaction, each of the four sharp tusks were capped with a razor sharp metal tip. His eyes were a vibrant fiery red surrounded by darkness and above them, the place where eyebrows would go, was pierced with several silver rings along both sides. His huge sloping forehead was raised along where his tresses started, almost like a crown, and along the ridges he had metal spikes embedded into his skin about an inch apart, obviously not a natural characteristic. Her eyes moved to his enormous pectorals and noticed that his skin had crimson colored splotches that matched the ends of his thick dreadlocks. She saw his fists tightening and she quickly composed herself and turned her gaze from his muscular body to the floor where it belonged. He gave a snarl then moved to his bed where he collapsed indolently on to it. She moved towards the end of the bed, unsure of what he wanted her to do or where she should go. When he didn't protest, she relaxed against the soft fur.

She opened her mouth to speak but quickly shut it. She wasn't allowed to speak to him unless he told her too. She buried her face into the fluffy white fur of an unknown animal and tried to force herself to sleep. She felt him shift and she quickly rolled into the end of the bed.

"The place where I left you today, what was it like?" He asked, probably trying to figure out if she liked the daycare or not.

“It was,” She paused. “Okay. Some of the other girls were a little pestering but other than that it was alright.”

“That male. Did he touch you after I left you?” He questioned.

She was confused for a moment. Did he mean inappropriately or in a punishing manner? She was never one for getting people in trouble but she also didn’t want to lie to him, especially after what Seleana had told her. He had every right to end her life whenever he pleased and she definitely didn’t want it to be tonight. “Sort of but it was only because I tried to run after you when you left.” She replied, cautiously.

He snarled and sat up to look at her. “How did he touch you and where?” He barked.

She moved away from him, unsure if he was angry at her or at the babysitter. “He just stuck his arm out and I ran into it, that’s all.” She squeaked out.

He grumbled and laid back down. She relaxed again but couldn’t help but feel like he was trying to defend her from the babysitter. That would mean that he would have to have feelings for her, other than the regular feelings a Master would have for a slave, that is. She rolled the thought around for a minute before deciding that it was insane. There was no way he could favor her that much, he was probably just defending his property. Yeah. That had to be it.

After a moment he said, “When I arrived and you wanted to come to me of your own will, you earned the right not to wear the restraint.”

Erie didn’t look at it like she was doing what was expected of her. She just wanted out of that horrid place and she knew he was the only way she would be set free. It wasn’t like she was ecstatic to see him or something. He was just a means to an end. She turned and looked at him as he laid on his back with one hand on his chest while the other rested at his side. She had to admit though, it was pretty cool that her master was the prince.

“No more talking.” He said firmly as he opened his wrist computer and turned down the lights.

There was still a small light that shined in from the bathroom and gave off just enough illumination for her to make out everything in the room. She messed with the furs until she managed to get one lifted enough to make a pillow out of. She wasn’t sure how much sleep she would get but she had to try to get some in. Her mind needed to rest, especially after such a horrific day. She laid on the side that didn’t have her scrubbed off skin and closed her eyes. Maybe tomorrow would be a better day, maybe N’yaka-de will be easier on her. It didn’t seem too hard to please him, she could at least pretend like she was a good pet. If the reward for such a trivial act of obedience was her freedom of space, maybe she could manage something even more impressive. She hoped the reward would be food. She always enjoyed foreign foods so it was something to look forward to. Hopefully it wasn’t some sort of dog food equivalent stuff and N’yaka-de gave her actual sustenance. The sound of some distance device whirring quietly within the walls lulled her to sleep quite quickly. She was thankful for whatever the noise was, it was just enough distraction to help her fall asleep.

There you have it! I felt like it was kind of a filler chapter for you guys but for Erie it was some important discoveries! My Spanish is a little iffy and if someone who is more fluent

wants to correct anything, just let me know and I'll edit it! See you soon!

Yautja Vocab:

N'yaka-de: Master

No'elia: Cat

Chapter 5

Good afternoon! Here I am with a new daily chapter. For some reason they keep getting longer. I apologize if it bothers some of you but I think this chapter will be granted a pass with it's content ;) I really love seeing the reviews and appreciate everyone's opinions! I probably would've stopped after chapter two if I hadn't made new friends!

I received a review from a reader but I can't seem to find it anymore? To answer your question: You seemed to have discovered a blip in my writing. I write these chapters every day and some at night on my phone so sometimes I miss things . I'm only ooman. To clarify: Yautja who don't understand human language can only speak and understand it IF they're wearing their bio-mask! There are no other devices that can allow them to understand it unless they already know it. Once again, I apologize for the misunderstanding. I will give my work an extra look over before posting to avoid future mistakes.

Without further ado, chapter 5 and once again, thank you for choosing Devotion!

Disclaimer: I do not own Predator, Alien or any characters pertaining to the Predator, Alien or AvP franchise!

Da'er awoke to his ooman using his thigh as a pillow. His immediate thought was to move her but as soon as he shifted his leg, her small and soft ooman hand laid gently on his rough thick skin and he decided to let her stay a moment longer. Her sleeping features were surprisingly compelling to observe. Her heart had slowed to a steady beat and if it weren't for the rise and fall of her back he would've assumed she were dying or dead. Her thick eyelashes barely rested against her smooth skin and occasionally they would flutter, an indication that she was deep in slumber. How could she sleep so easily knowing that a sain'ja of his magnitude, notorious for hunting and killing her own kind, was beneath her?

Her mane had gotten tangled in her unconscious migration from the foot of his bed to where she was now. He reached down and moved the knotted locks away from her neck to see her pulse throbbing beneath the thin layer of skin. It would take hardly any effort to take her life right now, with one swift rake of his claw, all of her thwei would stream out in a matter of seconds but why would he want to ruin his pristine white bedding? If she only realized just how lucky she was to even have lived this long, her little misbehaviors would never have occurred. She should be grateful for his fondness of collectibles.

He moved his leg out from under her and watched as she nestled into the furs, still sound asleep. He had to admit that her action the night before was positive progress. She was practically flying out of the companion service to get to him. The reaction of the guardian, however, had angered him. He realized the male was only doing his job but for some reason, he wanted to wring his neck with his bare hands. The male had quickly shifted his attitude once Dae'er gave him a warning but still, he had never wanted to dtai-kai'-dte another like he did last night. It was probably because he had too much c'nlip after final meal. He always was easily irritated if he consumed more than the usual.

He replaced his awu'asa and headed for his kehrite. He liked to start his day off with a good practice and he figured once he was finished, the ooman would be awake. He had a few more lessons for her before he dropped her off at the companion service for his first meal. He entered his private kehrite and opened his wrist gauntlet to summon four holographic River Ghosts, another species he preferred to hunt over the kainde amedha. They were much more intelligent which made them more of a challenge, unlike the hard meats who were always predictable. The only reason they made such perfect prey for Young Bloods was because of that exact trait. Putting the young males against a more advanced prey, like the River Ghosts, would just be homicide.

The River Ghosts he had spawned in had their signature weapon at the ready, a sickle like handheld sword made to hack off limbs which was exactly what they enjoyed to do. Dismember their targets, leaving them to bleed out and suffer. Unfortunately for these feeble challengers, they'd never even get close to his hide. He pulled his ki'cti-pa off his back and extended it. The two protruding blades at both ends expanded with a loud metallic ting. He was a master of the ki'cti-pa and this one was a gift from his father, the king, for completing his Veteran advancement so it was the best of the best, designed specifically for his hands.

The River Ghosts moved with great speed as two diverted off to the side to flank him and the other two charged him head on. He quickly moved his ki'cti-pa in a spinning motion to block the charging River Ghost's attacks, then dropped to swing it half circle, knocking the flanking enemy off their feet. He didn't receive any reprieve as one of the other two tried to bring it's weapon down from above, his timing was perfect as he spun his ki'cti'pa to knock the end of the sickle's blade diverting it from impacting on his th'syra. Another tried to swing at his neck and he rolled to dodge the attack. He sprung to his feet and ran at the River Ghost's spinning his ki'cti'pa around in a flurry of hardened metal and sharp blades. He turned his spear and with all his strength slung the approaching River Ghost on his left across the kehrite. He brought the spear parallel with the floor then he shifted his hold on the shaft and used it like a dagger to pierce through the skin of another enemy. He returned his hands to the proper holding of his weapon to block an incoming gouge to his back. Before he could attack offensively, he shifted again to block a second attack.

His blood was roaring with animosity as he shoved away one of the River Ghost's then turned and leaped into the air to bring his ki'cti'pa down onto the other. He impaled it's weak body so firmly that the end of his spear was embedded into the floor of his kehrite. He heard the thundering footsteps of the last River Ghost coming right for him and he extended his dah'kte, dropped to one knee and used them to uppercut the oncoming foe. It's body hung off his blades and leaked virtual black ooze down his fist and arm as it slid to a stop against the bottom of his dah'kte. The bodies fuzzed to a static then disappeared.

He walked over and yanked on his ki'cti'pa to free it from the metal floor. He retracted his dah'kte and opened his wrist gauntlet. Now that the warm up was over, he was ready for the actual practice. He spawned in a dozen more River Ghosts then set a timer to spawn in six at a time every thirty seconds. He closed his wrist gauntlet and positioned himself for battle. His targeted time was five minutes. Seventy two enemies in 300 seconds, it was his normal practicing goal that he achieved every day and it gave him a fulfilled workout. Could he do more? Of course, but this was a practice of strength and endurance, a way to get his thwei pumping. There would never be a time when he needed to fight off seventy two enemies outside of the kehrite and if for some reason he did, he anticipated that it would have to be a

life or death situation and he'd never allow himself to be in such a position. He was too setg'in of a sain'ja.

He went to work on the River Ghosts, killing one, then two, then three more, thirty seconds went by. He moved ferociously, stabbing and slicing, impaling and jabbing every solid object that came across his ki'cti-pa. Thirty more seconds. More offensive maneuvers, more blocking and parrying. Three minutes went by, twelve enemies left as more spawned in. He roared as he forced his body into over time, hacking away at anything that moved and he had been successful so far in keeping them from landing a blow. Four minutes and thirty seconds in as six more spawned in just as he smashed in the final th'syra from the previous six.

He had thirty seconds, thirty seconds to complete his training for the day and he threw it into high gear. He summoned all of his thar'n-dha and pushed himself to hastily beat his record. He jammed his dah'kte into the throat of one and used it's body to collide into another. With one hard push, he managed to fit two bodies on his blades. He retracted them to swiftly grab the throat of another and he drove his bare fist into it's skull until he felt his knuckles scraping against the wall of the kehrite.

Fifteen seconds left as he killed another. The last two charged at him at once, his ki'cti-pa was buried in his last victim and all he had were his dah'kte. He used the blades to block a flurry attack from both of them and as soon as he saw an opening he knocked one of the sickles aside and buried his blade into the gut of the one on his right. His mind was focused and he craved more bloodlust battle as he turned his sights onto the last one, he retrieved his ki'cti-pa and charged right for it. It tried to engage him with hand to hand combat but the clock was ticking and he had no time for such a slow fighting form. He used his forearm to block it's feeble blows and went straight for the kill, driving his spear deep into the last River Ghost's chest, completing his training with seconds to spare.

A shuffling sound to his left diverted his attention and he quickly threw a right hook, dah'kte extended. Fortunately, his eyes were quicker than his action as he saw his ooman in the path of his blow. He hastily retracted his blades but the maneuver was already in motion. He landed a heavy jab into her jaw, the frail bone shattered instantly on contact and her tiny body hit the floor of the kehrite, bounced then slid like it was made of air. A high pitched wail came from her curled up form as she clutched her head. Pauk. Why was she in here to begin with? He should've locked her in his room.

He walked over and looked down at her writhing body, thwei poured from her mouth and other orifices and he was certain he had ruptured her inner ear. He got a glance at her jaw and it was horribly displaced as it barely hung on by tendons. He snarled in annoyance. Foolish ooman, she should've known better. He reached down, lifted her up by her covering and tossed her over his shoulder. At least he didn't kill her. A centimeter higher and it would've been her skull he indented instead of her mandible. She moaned in agony as he carried her casually out of his domicile and down the halls to the medical terminal.

He entered the area and the medical workers acted as nonchalant as he did as one came around to scan his ooman's I.D. tag. The male motioned for Dae'er to follow him as he opened two sliding metal doors with his wrist gauntlet. "Room two." The male said gesturing down the hall. Dae'er carried his whining ooman into the room and laid her out in front of a

osseine machine. He had a less updated version on his main ship but he never had to use it before so he was unfamiliar with how it worked.

Within a few seconds, a bustling worker came in and forced his ooman's hands into the restraints on the table then shoved a rubber piece into what was left of her mouth. The worker programmed the machine to target the areas on his ooman that required repairing then turned the machine on. He watched as the table slid into the dark tunnel. It was much like the chronological cessation machine except this one closed her up inside and went dark.

He tried to see inside but it was no use, not even his bio mask could help him. It was way too tinted but she was definitely still alive in there. Her cries of pain intensified ten fold as the machine went to work on her disintegrated bones. Dae'er glanced at the worker who was drumming her claws on the metal of the machine, watching a progress bar move. His ooman's loud ear piercing cries turned into quiet whimpers as the machine chimed and pulled his ooman back out. Tears were flowing from her bloodshot eyes but her jaw was completely restored to normal.

"Follow me." The worker said and Dae'er picked up his ooman and carried her like a child with her legs around his waist and her head against his shoulder.

The last room was filled with tons of cabinets and drawers, all filled with medical supplies. The worker patted on another table and Dae'er laid his ooman down. He watched as the worker mixed together a liquid concoction then retrieved a funnel from a drawer.

"Hold her head." The worker instructed and Dae'er pressed his ooman's right cheek into the table.

The worker placed the funnel into his ooman's ear and poured the entire concoction inside of it. No'elia fought and flailed around on the table but she was going nowhere. The worker stepped back and they both watched for a moment then his ooman stopped kicking and her eyes looked up at Dae'er in surprise. Dae'er looked at the worker and she gave him a sly smirk. The female tossed the items in her hands into a bin then pulled an injection gun from a case. She loaded it up with a red serum then fired it off into the side of his ooman's jaw that was injured.

"She should be back to normal in an hour." The female said as she pulled out a tablet from her covering and held it out to scan his wrist gauntlet.

He watched as his funds were charged for the services. This ooman was starting to cost more than she was worth. The worker saluted him then hastily left. No'elia was quiet but it wasn't from the pain relievers, she was obviously upset he had struck her. He didn't know why she was bothered by it, it wasn't like he did it purposely or to punish her. She was the one that came in unannounced.

She sat up slowly and he went to grab her to put her back over his shoulder when her hands shot out and grabbed a hold of his. He stopped a moment, waiting for her to try to pry him off of her but she didn't. He watched in curiosity as she examined him then reached up and ran her cool soft palms down the bare part of his arm. Her tiny fingers looked unnatural against the sheath of his dah'kte as she trailed over it then when she got to his hand, she pulled it up to her face and nuzzled her cheek into his palm.

His entire hand took up the whole side of her head but she didn't seem to care as she brushed her soft red lips along his calloused palms. He was confused at first but then found the sensation of her soft cheek enticing and the only thing comparable were the luxurious furs he had in his room. He began a soft lulling purr as he took control and caressed her tiny face then gently raked his claws through her mane. He watched as she parted her lips slightly and closed her eyes, clearly enjoying his affections. The thought of her accepting his touch flipped the switch on his male instinct and his dai-shui filled the air. It had the same affect on her as it did Yautja females apparently as she suddenly gazed up at him with alluring and longing eyes. He stepped forward abruptly, shoving his way between her petite legs and pressing his groin into her core. She gasped and fell back onto her elbows with a look of surprise on her face. Someone passing by the doorway quickly snapped him out of his trance like state of mind and he hastily pulled her off the table and escorted her out of the room with his hand on her neck.

What was he doing? She was a pyode amedha, she was his trophy, she was his pet. How could he develop the urge to mate with her that suddenly? He glanced down at her face that was strained from trying to keep up with his rapid pace. Then, his eyes caught the movement of her breasts and they shook with every step she took. He snarled and looked away quickly. What was wrong with him? He'd never had this much trouble trying to control his urges before. It was her. Her allowance of letting him touch her in an amorous manner had tipped the scales. To his Yautja male instincts, she was his and it was urging him to claim her. Pauk. He had to get away from her.

He entered his domicile and left her in his front room while he rushed off to his bathing pool. Before he shed his armor to cool his amorous intentions, he slammed a fist into the wall. Pauk, this was crazy. He had never felt so out of control before. He couldn't get a grip on his primitive male instincts and it was driving him mad. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw No'elia come into the bathing room. C'jit.

"Wait for me out there." He ordered. She obeyed and for some reason it increased his lust for her. "Wait." He snarled and she stopped to look at him, awaiting her next instruction.

She had no idea of the struggle inside of him right now, the thoughts and ideas of what he wanted to do to her, to that perfect tiny little body. She tucked her bottom lip under her front teeth and looked at him in bewilderment. His eyes trailed over her bare skin. Her soft, smooth ooman skin. He couldn't take any more, he couldn't hold back any longer. She was his, he wanted her, craved her taste and he wanted her sweet scent all over him. She belonged to him!

He approached her swiftly and pressed her small body against the wall of the bathing room. Fear filled her eyes but he didn't care, he already had a taste of her want for him and it was more than enough to fuel the flames. He scooped her up over his shoulder and laid her on top of his bed. She tried to scurry away but he grabbed a hold of her ankle and pulled her back underneath him. He was going to have her, even if she didn't want him.

He unsheathed a small dagger from his leg armor and used it to cut through the straps on her covering, exposing her soft round breasts only for him. Next he sliced off her bottom coverings, revealing what he wanted the most. He blanketed her with his dai-shui and purred loudly to help calm her fear and flailing body. He laid a giant hand over her stomach and when his musk had successfully did as intended, he dropped to his knees and parted hers.

He rubbed his knuckle along her slit, dipping it barely into her opening to moisten it then coating her core with it. She let out a whimper at his contact with her sensitive area, obviously conflicted on whether to relax and enjoy his touch or to keep trying to fight him. Her arousal sent a wave of adrenaline through him and he hastily removed his codpiece and loincloth. He rose and leaned over her top of her, her small body engulfed beneath his stout one. He saw a dazed look in her eyes from her engorgement in his scent. She no longer tried to push him away but instead she reached up and grabbed hold of his under covering and pulled him closer to her.

Her slender legs rubbed against his thighs wildly, urging him to quickly penetrate her. He gripped his malehood and rubbed it through her te'dqi to coat it. He was thicker than her arm and he was definitely certain that he was bigger than any ooman male she'd laid with so he made sure his entire tip and shaft was completely slick. She moaned and whined erotically as she rocked her hips in anticipation.

He pushed himself inside her small opening, shoving through her tight walls. She melted into the furs at the sensation of his girth. Her smooth legs wrapped around his broad waist as he continued to inch himself inside her. He was about halfway in when she gasped.

"Right there." She moaned out seductively.

He began to move in and out of her, slowly at first and she gripped onto his biceps with her tiny fingers. She was much smaller than any Yautja female he'd been with and he felt powerful as he loomed over her petite body. Not like with Yautja, females of his kind always wanted to be in control and hardly ever allowed him to mount them. This, this was exactly what he wanted. Her little body was perfect and her tight warm walls were a wonderful sensation. After a few moments at the pace he was going, he watched her body writhe in pleasure and felt her tiny canal milk him over and over again.

Once the last of her release trickled away and he felt her become slicker, he shoved himself inside of her further. She gasped and latched into him, then she cried out when he seated himself to the hilt. Now it was his turn to fully enjoy everything she had to offer. He pumped faster and she whimpered at every thrust. He sat up on his knees, grabbed a hold of her hips and raised her up. He went faster and slammed her down roughly onto his malehood.

"P-please." She begged but he was too far gone.

He was going to claim her, bathe her in his h'dui'se so everyone knew that she belonged to him. He growled as he pulled out and flipped her over into her stomach. He pulled her soaked opening up to his malehood and pressed inside of her again. She grunted and whined at every hard thrust but no longer begged him to stop.

He felt his release coming and he gripped his claws into her side and pushed his malehood even deeper into her. Right as he did, his little ooman came for him again and squeezed him, forcing his release as well. He shoved himself deep inside of her, pressing against the end of her passage then he filled her with his seed and let out a triumphant roar. He gave a couple more hard quick thrusts against her then he gently raked his claws down her back.

He pulled out and let go of her and she collapsed onto the bedding. She didn't move as he gathered up her long mane with one hand and pulled it all to one side. Blood began to stream out over forming bruises where he gripped onto her with his claws. She didn't seem bothered

by that though but she remained face first on the bedding. He picked up his loincloth and codpiece and replaced it then he leaned over her body and purred affectionately.

She still didn't move. He rolled her over with his hand and saw that she was sound asleep. Exhausted from their mating. He trilled in satisfaction then noticed her cut up coverings at his feet. She certainly couldn't wear those anymore and he used his bio mask to summon his servant.

It didn't take long for his servant to retrieve another covering and the one he selected was quite different than the last, it looked similar to something Yautja females wore. He decided it'd have to do. He shook his ooman awake and once he got her to sit up, he tossed her the new covering.

"Put this on and hurry, I'm late for first meal." He said as he watched her climb off his bed and stand. She abruptly froze in place, a look of surprise on her face.

He growled in confusion and followed her gaze to between her legs. His te'dqi steadily streamed down her thighs and pooled on the floor. He watched as she dropped the new covering and dashed for the bathing pool. Before she jumped in, he stopped her.

"No! You will keep my scent fresh on your skin." He said and her eyes lit up in disbelief.

He walked over and retrieved a cloth for her to clean herself up with. It was customary for the male to clean up the female after a mating so she didn't have to move very much for insemination to occur but No'elia was ooman, it couldn't be possible for her to bear his young and even if she could, she had already stood up. He tossed her the cloth and instructed her to wipe off his seed then she followed him back into his bed chamber.

She put on the new covering and he was pleased with it. It covered her entire mid section but underneath, her female parts were exposed. He figured that was fine since no one but him shall see that part. He motioned for her to come to him and he placed a firm hand on the nape of her neck.

He led her through the hallways, getting judging eyes but he didn't care. He had taken his ooman for himself and it wasn't like he was the first to have mated his companion. He felt her step closer to his side but he quickly moved her away. It was obvious she favored him more now and while he was glad she did, he still had to escort her in the customary way. If she were against his side, it would be difficult to keep his hand on her neck. He reassured her by rubbing his thumb against the side of her neck and he felt her body relax.

He dropped her off at companion services then headed towards the dining hall. This citadel belonged to his clan and while the sain'ja that resided here were his mei'hsweis, there were still aristocrats that held judging eyes. At final meal the night before, the subject of his ooman companion was brought up. The usual opinions like "a sain'ja shouldn't have a companion" and "you're a prince, you don't need an ooman to entertain your desires" were the most popular. He enjoyed the power that came with his born title but he hated the kind of Yautja that came with it. They were all unworthy wealthy fools.

He rounded a corner and immediately saw someone he had managed to avoid since he arrived home. Talia, a daughter of the Ancient, U'th'ri, was a thorn in his side. She had made it clear to him and to everyone else on Yautja Prime that she favored him. She had offered herself to bear his young many times but she was exactly what he didn't want, the epitome of

an Yautja female. She was bossy, controlling, conceited and thought that he should worship the ground she walked on. To him, she wasn't even worth the dirt caught in his sabatons.

He turned on his heel to try for a new direction but it was too late, she had spotted him and was making her way towards him. If he wasn't in a crowded waiting area, he would've bolted for sure but unfortunately, everyone saw her shoving her way to him. He had no choice but to keep appearances and allow her to approach him.

"Prince Dae'er." She said giving him the honorary salute.

"Talía." He replied. He had noticed her and that was all he needed to do. He walked past her heading for the doors into the dining hall but she quickly stepped in front of him.

He growled in disapproval. "I heard you have an ooman companion." She said and Dae'er tried to sidestep her again but she moved as he did. "You don't need a companion. You have me." She whispered.

"I have no one." He replied sternly, still trying to avoid her.

"You purposely deny me for an ooman?" She asked under her breath.

"I deny you because you are vexatious." He said raising his voice slightly.

"There's no need for you to degrade me and humiliate me! I am an aristocrat, a daughter of the great sain'ja U'th'ri." Dae'er sensed her anger flaring up but unlike his ooman's, her anger didn't trigger his male instinct, it only annoyed him. "I demand respect." She whispered.

He was still on edge from his training and his recent mating with his ooman had increased his male pride. Talía's anger felt like a challenge and he had enough of her useless prattle. "Respect? You deserve respect?" He snarled as he reached out and grabbed a hold of her under her chin and pulled her face closer to his body. 'Inhale. That scent is that of my ooman. Her skin will be the only skin that touches mine, her eyes will be the only ones I need to impress and she's the only one that will ever earn my respect. You're a beastly female and I will never allow you to bear my young.' He snarled as he shoved her violently away from him. "I am your prince and you will treat me as such. You have been denied courtship, multiple times and if you approach me with conversation of it again, you will never be allowed in this citadel again. Do I make myself clear?" He barked.

Her mandibles twitched and her tresses raised up in anger. Knowing Talía, it wasn't his words that had bothered her so much as his deliberate humiliation in front of everyone she knew. She was a persistent little Zabin and he knew she wouldn't heed his warning about kicking her from the citadel but he would remain true to his word when she didn't comply. It was guaranteed that she would complain to her sire again and bc he was an Ancient, Dae'er's father had no choice but to hear his complaint.

It was something he'd deal with later but right now, the desire for Talía to leave him alone was greater than future repercussions. He shoved past her knocking her shoulder as he went. At least she was quiet. He entered the dining hall and stood in front of his seat at the end of the table. He was the highest ranking Yautja in his clan with his royal title and was entitled to the head of the table.

The next highest ranking Yauja sat at his sides and once he raised his fist then brought it across his chest in the honorary na'tauk, the males took their seat and the rest of the inhabitants were seated according to rank. As they were being seated, the meal was brought out. He wasted no time in devouring his portions.

Most of the conversation was about the government. Politics, wars and the economy. Every now and then a sain'ja would tell a story about his most recent kv'var and that was the only time Dae'er listened in. It was interesting to hear how someone had completed a chiva or the freak accidents that would occur on a kv'var. Even with all the boring drivel he still found his mind wondering about his ooman female and what she was doing in companion services.

She probably reeked of his dai-shui and he wondered what the other oomans thought of it. The males near him had immediately sensed his fresh dai-shui when he walked in and while they shot him looks of question, they never asked him outright. He was their prince, they would be stepping out of bounds if they did.

The servants came out and set trays of desserts down. He thought of No'elia and how she'd probably enjoy something real to eat for sustenance and instructed a servant to wrap one of the spongy desserts for him and to have it waiting in his domicile upon his return.

After he left the dining hall and headed for companion services, he decided that tomorrow he would leave for his kv'var. His ooman was more than well adjusted now and he knew he'd have no problem getting her to obey him so taking her on a long kv'var should go smoothly. She may even enjoy the nature of the planet he was going to.

He approached the fence and his ooman ran over to it and slid her delicate hand through one of the holes to reach out to him. He grabbed hold of it and rubbed her small palm with his thumb. The guardian approached her angrily and yanked her away from the fence, pulling her hand from Dae'er's. He roared loudly, and barreled through the doorway, dead set on beating the guardian's skull in.

His temper flared even more when he saw his ooman's nostrils painted red from the guardian's mistreatment. This male had tested his last nerve and he wasn't about to put up with it anymore. The male realized he was challenging him and tried to back down and submit but it was too late, Dae'er wanted a piece of him and if he didn't fight back, then he'd take all of him.

He reached out and shoved the male's shoulder, a clear indication that he was challenging him but the male didn't respond. He shoved him again, this time much harder and it triggered the reaction Dae'er was looking for. The male roared and swung at Dae'er but he was obviously not trained beyond beating female oomans. The guardian's natural instinct flared up the moment Dae'er challenged him, summoning new found strength, it was too bad he didn't have the proper training to utilize it.

Dae'er knocked away his careless blows then grabbed ahold of his armor and tossed him across the room. The ooman females screamed wildly as they huddled in a corner on the opposite side of the room. Dae'er went over, seated himself on top of the male and lashed into him ruthlessly. The commotion of their brawl had other Yautja flocking into the room. It took six of his mei-hsweis to restrain him as they tore him off of the unconscious male.

“No’elia!” He shouted as they barely had enough hold onto him to drag him from the room.

He saw her running for the doorway after him but another female stopped her and he realized he had forgotten about the electric current that kept them from escaping the room. He watched as her face got further and further away. When they finally stopped, they released him and asked questions of what had happened.

“You were a few blows from becoming a bad blood.” One of his mei’hswei said.

His brother was right, a civil brawl like that is supposed to be taken to a kehrite and it was never to the death. He couldn’t help himself, seeing him pull his ooman from his grasp set all of his fires on ablaze. The guardian had already received his warning yesterday, Dae’er was simply making good on his threat. A lot of males had come immediately to retrieve their oomans and Dae’er watched as they dispersed. No’elia, he had to get her.

He stood and his brothers stepped in his way. “Move.” He ordered but they didn’t budge. “I am your prince, I order you to move!” He roared.

They gave each other doubtful looks but as soon as they saw Dae’er’s victim being toted away to the medical terminal they moved and allowed him to get to No’elia. She was the only one left in the room and she was curled up on a couch. A new substitute guardian stood at the doorway.

“No’elia.” He said and she immediately jumped up and ran over to the doorway, the guardian scanned her tag then she dashed out of the room and locked her arms around him.

He reached up and wiped away some of her blood then he placed his hand on the nape of her neck and led her past his gawking brothers towards his domicile. He didn’t have to hear to know what they were thinking. They obviously blamed his ooman for his outburst but it was truly the guardian’s fault. The male had tested his patience and he was certain any master would’ve done the same if they saw the guardian mistreat their ooman. He was only defending what was his.

He returned to his domicile and No’elia was quiet. She hadn’t spoken to him since they mated. He watched her peruse the trophies and treasures he had as decor in his front room. Then he remembered the dessert he had saved for her and looked over at his table to see a few wrapped up neatly.

“I had some dessert saved for you.” He said nodding towards the table.

“Dessert?” She asked as she walked over and picked up one of the wrapped sweets.

“It’s a pastry made from pilo berries. Very sweet.” He said as he watched her unwrap it and take a bite out of it.

She let out a satisfied moan then devoured it quickly. “These are amazing! So fruity yet so candied!”

It pleased him to see her so appreciative of his gift for her. He opened his wrist gauntlet and began to request items for his ship from his servant when an alert that his father wanted to meet with him. Apparently, word traveled fast.

"I was wondering," No'elia said as she swallowed a bite of pastry. "Is it alright if I know your real name?" She asked.

He pondered on her question. While it wasn't important for her to know it, it was somehow interesting that she desired to know it. His immediate thought went to her sweet voice panting out his real name as he mated her. Just the thought had his malehood stirring. He figured maybe it wouldn't be a terrible thing if she knew his name.

"Dae'er. Dae'er son of K'elar. I have many titles as well. Veteran and Prince are my most esteemed ones." He said and the light in her eyes grew brighter.

"What does it mean? Your name?" She asked as his wrist gauntlet alerted him again of another message to address his father.

"Alone. My father calls me, Des-ti Dae'er, Always Alone. I had refused to group with my brothers for training when I was a child and preferred to do it alone. He said the Ancients had been appropriate in their vision at my naming ceremony." He had never told anyone that story before and those that knew about it were only those who were closest to him.

She smiled at him. "You're not alone now." She said.

Dae'er was stunned for a moment. She was right and as long as he was alive, she would be too. He never thought about how far he had to go outside of his comfort zone for her. He had never needed anyone or anything except himself but now, he had someone who was completely dependent on him. The thought should've been unsettling but it wasn't. In fact, it didn't bother him at all. He was pleased that she would be by his side for the rest of his life. Just seeing the life in her eyes light up from hearing about something important to him was the greatest reward he had ever received.

His wrist gauntlet alerted him once more and this time he had to respond to it. He looked at No'elia who was reaching for her third pastry. He couldn't take her back to the companion services, not after what he had just did and he didn't want to take her with him. His father despised oomans and wouldn't take kindly to him bringing her especially since what he wanted to talk about had to do with her. He had no choice but to leave her.

"No'elia, I have to go for a little while. I need you to stay here. Don't leave the domicile. My servant will come and go, but refrain from speaking to him. I'll return as quickly as I can." He said and she nodded in agreement.

He hastily left the room and No'elia. He disliked having to leave her alone but he had no choice. He wasn't looking forward to his father's rant. The sooner he got it over with the sooner he could return to No'elia.

He had to travel quite a ways to reach his father's citadel and when he arrived he was greeted by old familiar faces. Servants that had been serving there since he was young and some of his father's associates nodded as he went by. He rushed passed them and headed for the throne room where his father resided. He passed his oldest brother, Jaed'er, the First Born, who gave him an insulting gesture as he went by. He ignored him as he continued on to his sire.

His father was perched high atop a throne made of ivory and skulls. He wore silver, heavy and broad armor that, unlike active sain'ja, covered his entire body. His father was a master of

swords, specifically the dah'nagara. His prized blades were sheathed on his back and the leather wrapped metal hilts protruded from behind his spaulders. His tresses were the same red and black color as Dae'er's and heavy with different colored rings. Silver for his achievements in battle, red for his skills in hunting, blue for his success as a king and the black rings represented every 100 enemies he had slain in front of the Ancients. There were also a few golden ones that represented his winnings in the annual sain'ja games. His father was a renowned Yautja and sain'ja, wiser than any Ancient and stronger than any foe. Dae'er was proud to be a son of K'elar, he was grateful for his father's devoted time to his training. He wouldn't be the sain'ja he was today without the dedicated discipline his father had bestowed upon him.

Dae'er dropped to one knee at the base of his father's throne and gave the honorary na'tauk. "Father, you have summoned me?" He asked as he kept his head bowed in respect.

His father rose up from his throne and descended the stairs. His heavily armored footsteps were solid as they made contact with each step. "My son, Des-ti Dae'er, na'jauka. Rise and yin'tekai your sire dekna to dekna."

Dae'er did as he was instructed and stood slowly to look into his father's gray eyes. Dae'er had never been intimidated by anyone in his entire life except for his father. His eyes were always cold and stern, even when Dae'er was young, his father gave him no warmth and spared him no harsh judgement. He permeated with strength and power and any smart creature would cower in his presence. Fortunately for Dae'er, he had become accustomed to his sire's lack of h'chak and was able to keep himself composed in his soul piercing gaze. His sire reached up and placed a firm hand on his shoulder.

"We have much to discuss." He said as he ascended his throne again.

Dae'er knew he was about to get a gahn'tha-cte lecture. His father was never one for taking no for an answer and whatever he had on his mind Dae'er knew it involved No'elia. He only hoped his father didn't request something of him that he couldn't do. He prayed to Paya that his sire, for once in his sain'ja life, granted h'chak on his youngest son. The odds of such an occurrence, however, were slim to none.

Yautja Vocab:

Ooman: Human

Kv'var: Hunt

Kainde Amedha: Hard meats, Xenomorphs, or what we know as the creatures from Alien.

Pyode Amedha: Soft Meats, humans.

Dah-kte: Wrist Blades

Na'tauk: Salute

N'jauka: Greetings, Welcome, Hello

Sain'ja: Warrior

Dtai'kai'-dte: Fight/Battle

Awu'asa: Armor

Dekna(s): Eye/Eyes

Dah'nagara: Shortsword

H'dlak: Fear

No'eli: Cat/Feline

Thwei: Blood

C'nlip: Intoxicating Beverage, much stronger than human alcohol.

Kehrite: Training room, gym

River Ghosts: Hostile insect like humanoids with a hard exoskeleton covering on their body. They are much faster, more agile and much more powerful than humans and Xenomorphs.

Ki-cti-pa: Combi-stick

Th'syra: Skull

Setg'in: Deadly

Thar'n-dha: Strength

Dai-shui: Yautja Musk

Pauk: Fuck

C'jit: Shit

Te'dqi: Secretion

H'dui'se: Scent

Mei'hswei(s): Brother(s), also used as a term Yautja call other members of their clan.

Zabin: Insect like creatures, much like the mosquito.

H'chak: Mercy

gahn'tha-cte: Ruthless

Des-ti: Always or constant.

yin-tekai: Honor

Paya: Yautja's equivalent to God.

Chapter 6

I hope everyone had a great weekend! Sorry I didn't post anything, I like to play video games as well as write fanfiction so a lot of my weekend time went to that! BUT! I do have a chapter for this Monday afternoon. Thank you to everyone who takes the time to read my work and favorite and review. It means so much to me to see the enjoyment of others!

Thanks again for choosing Devotion!

Disclaimer: I do not own Predator or Alien nor do I own the characters pertaining to the Predator, Alien or AvP franchise!

The quiet of Dae'er's apartment was a little frightening. He had left long ago and the servant had only came by once. He brought something in on a cart then left and he hadn't been back since. Her jaw pain was gone but for some reason it felt like the bone was itchy. Was it even possible to feel itchiness in a bone? She rubbed it again to try and get rid of the sensation.

She had witnessed first hand the power her master had. If he hadn't realized it was her at the last second, she was sure she wouldn't be sitting here right now. She had only been here two days and it felt like a lifetime. The day had barely begun and already a soap opera full of stuff had happened. Her dislocated jaw, the amazing sex and Dae'er's explosion in the daycare was just unbelievable.

She didn't expect Dae'er to be so animal like towards her. Back at the hospital place, she thought that showing him she was thankful for taking care of her would reward her with something amazing she never thought it would lead to what it did. Not that she was complaining, hell, if anything she should be singing praises of Dae'er. She'd never had such fulfilling sex before, granted, she had only been with a few human guys but after experiencing an Yautja..she never wanted to go back.

The daycare thing..she was lost for words about that situation. She was glad the babysitter got what he had coming but damn, she didn't want to see him almost get murdered over her. The look of Dae'er as he beat the guy to a pulp was..scary. His muscles were engorged with rage and his anger could be felt by everyone in the room. At that moment, he wasn't her master, he was a killer. A cold blooded killer. If it weren't for the rest of the Yautja that restrained him, he certainly would've completed the task he set out to do.

According to Seleana, all of the companion girls had sex with their masters. It would've been strange if she hadn't slept with Dae'er. What was rare, was that he marked her with his strangely intoxicating scent. Seleana said only males who intended to have children with a female, marked her. Luckily, Seleana said she had never heard of a human becoming pregnant so she had nothing to worry about. With everything that was happening, she couldn't help but feel like she did have something to worry about.

The doors to the apartment opened and Erie ducked down on the couch. She peeked over the arm and saw a female yautja looking around the room. She paced over towards the bedroom and peered inside before coming back to the door.

"I know you're in here. I can smell his overwhelming scent combined with your repulsive one." Her voice was bold but feminine and she wore an amazing outfit.

The breast covering was held up by nothing but her large breasts and a shimmery golden belt laid loosely on her full hips, accentuating her slim muscular waist. An intricate hanging leather piece covered her girly parts in the back and front. She had jewelry on her arms and ankles and amazing tattooed symbols all over her bare skin. Her eyes were cat shaped and a dazzling blue color and her skin was much lighter than any Yautja woman's she had seen so far. It was such a light green that it was almost yellow. Her dreadlocks were pulled back in a half ponytail and vibrant blue rings adorned each strand. What stuck out to Erie the most, though, were the metal talons she wore over her real ones. They were gold and looked razor sharp.

"Well, pathetic human, are you going to hide all day or shall I drag you from your hiding spot?" She spoke english almost perfectly and she wasn't even wearing a mask.

Erie really didn't want to be dragged out and Dae'er had instructed her not to speak to anyone. This female was obviously not going to leave, maybe Dae'er had sent her. She slowly raised her face above the ivory back of the couch and the female gave her a disgusted look.

"Come here." She said motioning to her with one of those sharp finger coverings.

Erie climbed slowly off the couch and around to the back. "Closer." The female said. Erie didn't want to go any closer to her. She had a feeling this girl didn't like her and if she got hurt by her especially after Dae'er told her not to talk to strangers, he wouldn't be too happy. 'Are you deaf?' The woman asked angrily. Erie shook her head. "Then come closer." Erie knew she was going to regret this.

She moved closer to the woman and watched nervously as she circled her like a vulture about to pick at a carcass. Here she was, once more forced to deal with confrontation but now, she wasn't even sure why there was a need for it. She didn't know this woman, she'd never even laid eyes on her before, so why was she so adamant about torturing her?

"You're puny and weak. How does such a frail body even hold against a capable male such as the prince?" She suddenly paused her circling behind Erie's back and the tone in her voice went from serious to curious. "Is he gentle with you?"

Erie still didn't want to reply. What the hell would she say? Yes? No? She tucked her bottom lip under her front teeth and prayed that the woman hurried up so she could dive back into the safety of the sofa.

"How can he desire this," The woman said motioning at Erie's body. "over me?"

All of a sudden the pieces clicked into place. This female was obviously upset that Dae'er had slept with her. Jealous even. Her dreadlocks raised on the top of her head and her mandibles flared.

"What did you do? How did you seduce him so easily? And why don't you speak, you cowardly piece of rubbish!" She shouted.

Well, here it goes, the part that Erie was afraid of. She raised her shoulders and hugged her body tightly in her arms. She was about to be clawed to death by a jealous alien woman and for what? For practically being forced to have sex with someone that had already kidnapped her and subdued her into being his slave. This was way more drama than she had ever witnessed in her entire life. She had to say something to this crazed woman before she plucked her eyes out with those talons of hers.

"I haven't done anything wrong." She said meekly.

The female reached out with her golden claws and grabbed a hold of Erie's cheeks. "You expect me to believe that you are innocent in this? Dae'er isn't a beast. He is a warrior, he is a prince! Such behavior is beneath him but ever since you showed up he's been a different male. Lavishing you with his affections, threatening to dismiss me, ME, from the clan. What's worse, is that he almost killed a civilian because he was performing his duty. Don't you stand there, you pathetic waste of space, and tell me that you haven't done anything!" She roared in anger at Erie then shoved her backwards.

Erie backed into a small table behind the sofa. She didn't know what to say. She hadn't done any of those things purposely and how was she supposed to know that something as trivial as holding his hand would've broken a gigantic concrete dam and flooded everything and everyone. If she had, she never would've gotten so greedy for rewards and attempted to coax him more into her favor. Maybe this woman was right. Maybe somehow, she had signaled to him that she wanted more than just what he was giving her. Maybe it was her fault.

"None of it matters now. I've confronted my father of Dae'er's threat to me. As we speak, the prince is being dealt with by his father about his actions and apparent obsession with *you*. I imagine that your time here will be swiftly cut short. So enjoy what little of it you have left, human." The female said as she reached out and lightly dragged her golden talons down the side of Erie's face before turning and leaving the apartment.

Erie was frozen in fear. Her time would be cut short? She would be killed? She quickly wiped away tears and the tiny trickles of blood the females claws had drawn. Dae'er would never kill her, he obviously cherished her enough to not let anything happen to her so far. How could he just end her life after everything that happened? Seleana had said that a male marking a female was like publicly admitting his devotion to her. That female Yautja was just crazy and obsessed with Dae'er, that's all. He'd never be forced to kill her, right?

Panic was setting in from her uncertainty. That jealous woman had definitely opened the floodgates on Erie's mess and let all the water out. She made sure to hit Erie where it hurt and not just hit her but she dug those crazy gold claws in and raked around. When Dae'er returned, it could be with direct orders from his father to get rid of her and what then? Just lay down and let him end her life? Maybe he'd show mercy and return her to Earth or the auction house place. She winced at that thought. The stories Seleana had told her about that place sounded worse than death. She was at a crossroads and all she could do was wait for Dae'er to return.

The hours rolled by and Erie watched as the brighter sun descended in the sky and was replaced with the dimmer one, twice now. She had been left alone in the apartment for so long and the servant still hadn't been back. She had strolled through Dae'er's trophy rooms several

times, going back to make sure she didn't miss a single item. Then she looked through his other small trinkets and items he had on shelves and in cases. Things she had never seen before; colorful rocks, shimmery dusts and tiny statues. Even some strange plants that seemed to live without water or any form of sustenance, kind of like her. She had gone forever with just those weird twinkie things Dae'er brought her earlier and she didn't feel weak or hungry at all. Come to think of it she wasn't even that thirsty.

She had gone to the bathing pool and took drinks from the water but it was mainly to wet her dry mouth rather than trying to quench her thirst. One of those procedures at the alien spa must've altered her body and need for nourishment. If they could stop her from aging, why not make it to where she didn't need to be hungry and thirsty as frequently.

She buried herself beneath Dae'er's white fluffy furs on his bed and just stared up at the ceiling. The distant whirring of the machine was doing its work on her as her eyes began to get heavy with sleep. She wanted to be awake when Dae'er returned but she felt like she hadn't slept in days. She flicked her eyes open again trying to keep herself awake.

She felt like she had barely drifted to sleep when she sat up abruptly still thinking that she had to stay awake to see Dae'er. She looked at the bed then the bathing room then out in the living room. The other sun was up again and Dae'er hadn't been home. She climbed out of bed and went to check his gym just in case but nothing. It didn't even look like he had been back and left again.

The time here felt so slow and what she assumed were minutes had to be hours. Using the suns to try and keep track of the time was close to useless. The brighter sun was obviously daytime but then the dimmer sun rose up like the moon would. After that, the suns went down and it became dark, like night time, so trying to use them for any sort of time was impractical. For all she knew the dimmer one could just mean a different day. What she did know was that they had made a full cycle, going on three times now.

She sat down on the couch and wondered what could've happened to Dae'er. Maybe he just spent the night there? But surely he would've wanted to come home because of her. The door opened and she jumped up expecting Dae'er to stroll in but it was just the servant. He had cleaning supplies and cleaning tools and Erie watched as he went around and started cleaning the apartment.

She stalked him around the huge home, watching him clean off cases and polish skulls that didn't even look like they needed to be polished. The scrawny Yautja male noticed that she was following him and gave her a chuff of disapproval. He wasn't wearing a mask so he probably wouldn't understand her but she had to try.

"Um, N'yaka-de, he didn't come back." She said.

He ignored her and went about his business. She figured he wouldn't understand her. He was probably instructed not to talk to her like she wasn't supposed to talk to him. She headed back to the front room and laid down on the couch.

She thought about her family back on Earth. Her mother was probably beside herself. Erie was an only child and her father had died a couple of years ago so her mother was horribly alone. She imagined her poor mother crying over an empty coffin as everyone probably assumed she had been eaten by one of those acidic monsters. It was probably for the better

since being kidnapped by aliens had to be a more horrible way of losing someone. She could definitely vouch for the horrible part.

The door opened and Erie didn't get up as she thought it was the servant doing his business but when she saw the scrawny man standing at the gym staring at the front door she scrambled to her feet. Dae'er was heading into the bedroom and Erie dashed after him. He had laid down on the bed and she rushed over to climbed up at the foot.

She pleaded in her head for him to speak first so she could talk to him but he just laid there. He was obviously tired from being gone for so long so she crawled in between his legs and laid her head on his thigh. She was amazed at how scorching hot his body was. It was like laying next to a roaring fire his skin was so warm. She shifted her head around trying to get comfortable but his armor wasn't letting her. She finally found a good spot in between the metal piece that covered his manly parts and the crease in his thigh.

She wondered if his father had instructed him to get rid of her and if that's why he was quiet. Maybe he was wondering what to do with her. Stab her with his big hand swords or take her out back and shoot her in the head like Seleana had said. She turned on her side and began to cry. She didn't want to die. Not like this, anyway.

She felt gentle claws stroking her hair and she closed her eyes to enjoy the sensation. "Why are you upset, No'elia?" He asked.

She tucked her lower lip. She didn't want to get in trouble for talking to that female but she was dying to know if what the woman had said was true. She nuzzled her face against his leg and pulled her knees up closer to her body.

"No'elia. Speak." He said more sternly.

She couldn't take it, she just had to know. "A woman Yautja came here and she told me that your father would make you get rid of me." She blurted out rapidly. "Please. If you return me home, I'll never tell anyone about any of this, I swear. Just, please, don't get rid of me." She wept as she lifted his hand and used her face to open his palm and rub her cheek into it.

He pulled his hand away and sat up. "What was she called?" He asked.

Erie was confused, she didn't care about the woman, she only wanted to know if her master was finished with her. "She didn't say."

"Her appearances. What were her appearances?" He questioned as he became more agitated.

"She had blue eyes, tattoos all over her body." She thought for a moment. "She had these weird golden finger things."

He growled in aggravation as he got up from the bed. "That conniving female! I'll tear her to shreds!" He said as he knocked over a weapon rack.

"So is it true?" She asked quietly.

He paused a moment. "I'd rather become an outcast than live a life without you at my side." He snarled out.

Erie's lip quivered as she tried to restrain her sobs. She should've never doubted her master. He had done so much for her in such a small amount of time, why would he be so easily swayed into taking her life? She looked at him differently now. So far she had only been acting out of fear. Fear of being punished or worse. Now, now it was obvious that he cherished her for her and not what she was in his society.

He was pacing around the room angrily. He was upset that the female Yautja had been to his apartment and bothered her. He was snarling and growling as he shuffled through thoughts. Erie laid back down on the furs, she was finally able to relax and not have to worry about dying today.

"N'yaka-de." She said and he stopped pacing to look at her. "I'm sorry for being such a burden on you. If it weren't for me you wouldn't have gotten in trouble with your father."

"It's not your fault, No'elia. I am not in affliction. My father has sided with me on the matter. He is only disappointed that I have not yet chosen a female of worth and sired young." He came over to the bed and stood over top of her. "The female that came and pestered you is called Talia. She has set her greedy eyes on my loins and doesn't take no for an answer. She is a crazy female but she is still one of worth so my brother, the firstborn, has agreed to take her as a mate. I am expected to find my own female eventually but for now, I am free to do as I please."

She smiled at him but she still couldn't help but feel like she was the cause of all of this. Apparently, this Talia was worse than she was at causing trouble. Her worry must've been evident as her master began purring loudly. It was a sound she had grown rather fond of and found it quite relaxing. She always felt an overwhelming sense of content whenever he did it around her.

"We'll be leaving this domicile for a while. I'm going on a hunt and the creatures I'm hunting for will be hibernating soon. We're leaving when the second sun rises." He said as he exited the room still aggravated by the Talia situation.

No'elia hopped out of the bed and followed Dae'er. He was speaking to the servant in Yautja and afterwards, the servant promptly left. Dae'er turned and saw her then he walked over to her and stared down at her. He took off his heavily decorated mask and Erie admired his intimidating features.

His massive mandibles, his sharp fangs and tusks made for ripping flesh were compelling but it was those burning embers for eyes that had her truly mesmerized. She stared up at him and he looked down at her and his gaze had become much more gentler than she had ever seen him look at her. He lifted his giant hand and slowly caressed her cheek. She nuzzled into his palm then his touch moved from there down her neck to her bare shoulder.

At first, she wanted to move away from him but then she couldn't think of a reason why she didn't want him to touch her. She loved the fact that he would defend her and even fight for her. It made her feel wanted and safe. It was her Earth habits telling her that he was a monster and that he was a cold blooded killer and that it was taboo for her to like him in any way. She wasn't on Earth anymore and she liked him and his affections for her so why deny it?

He had started up that wonderful purring sound again as she allowed him to continue with his exploration of her body. He came closer and lifted her up onto the table behind the couch, planting himself between her legs. His hands gripped her head lovingly while hers trailed over the ridges of his well defined muscles. He was built like a concrete wall with each muscled area so firm and chiseled it was like running her fingers over stones.

His claws went to her thighs and he trailed them up her hips and sides taking her thin leather dress piece with them. She helped remove it completely, leaving her naked body exposed for him to do as he pleased. He did exactly that as he bowed his head and carefully flicked his smooth tongue against her pert nipple. She moaned and arched her back and he switched over to the other one.

The way she felt in his hands made her feel so protected and safe that it increased her arousal for him. It was like nothing in the universe could touch her as long as he had her. He removed the armor covering his groin exposing his fully erect member. He was so... enormous, she couldn't believe he had fit in her at all. He had to be three inches thick and almost a foot long. He had extra ridges down both sides of his shaft and it was slightly lighter than the rest of his body. Other than that, it resembled a regular circumcised human male.

He noticed her gawking at his member and he trilled at her, obviously liking that she was admiring his body. She smiled at him then placed her small hand on his cheek then ran her fingers over his mandible. When she went to touch his metal capped tusk he moved away and she guessed it was because they were razor sharp. Instead, he took her hand and placed it on his dreadlocks. They were smooth and warm and as she gathered a few to run her fingers down them, he increased his purring while tilting his head towards her hand.

She had never really noticed the multiple colored bands before but she had noticed that he had way more than the others. They must've been like all the skulls he kept, another form of trophy. He growled erotically and lifted her from the couch to carry her into the room.

This time she was much more willing and much more turned on by his gestures. He was laying over her, propped up by one of his arms as he used his other hand to rub gently down her body stopping at her center to tease at her core. He used the pad of his middle finger to rub into her slit, coating his entire finger in her arousal. She parted her thighs and he carefully slipped his finger inside of her. She gasped lightly at the warmth of him then she tilted her hips and moaned when he slipped another one into her.

His fingers moved in accord as they dipped in and out of her, setting her core on fire with want. She leaned into his body and tugged on his chest armor while mewling, trying to get him to just climb on top of her and take her right then. He obliged and moved his massive body between her legs. His giant member rubbed against her slick opening, teasing her crazily. She tried to angle herself so that he inched into her and when she felt the tip of his member barely glide into her, she let out a delicious moan.

After that, his familiar wood smelling scent flooded her senses pushing her over an edge she was barely hanging onto. She gasped and relaxed against the furs then when she felt him slide inside of her she parted her lips and moaned seductively. He filled every inch of space, taking up all the room she had to spare and then some. She felt the sensation of a climax just from the feel of his girth and as soon as he moved, her core exploded into a massive wave of

pleasure. She relaxed her legs and every time her small walls clamped onto his member it sent a jolt of ecstasy through every limb on her body all over again.

She had never come just from the sensation of someone being inside of her before. He had stopped moving as soon as she peaked but when she tightened her legs around him again he thrust back into her. His enormous arms surrounded her tiny body in a cradle of muscle and power as he held her close to his chest. His body heat radiated on to her, blanketing her in warmth.

She pressed her ear up to his chest and listened to his inhuman heartbeat throb against her cheek. It was amazing to her how something so different ended up being the best thing she had ever had in her life. He could've easily been the worst thing that ever happened to her but for some reason he had chosen to go a different route. He went from a harsh and stern master to a gentle and caring guardian.

When he shoved himself all the way into her she let out a gasp and when he pulled out and thrust into her again she winced. He was hitting her cervix and the pain was echoing into her hips. She latched onto his sides and tightened her grip everytime he slammed into the end of her canal. Her eyes began to water and tears trickled down her cheeks. It hurt but she didn't want to move from this position, she loved being this close to him and she wanted to stay this way until he released inside of her.

He clutched her tighter to his chest as he pumped inside of her harder then he pressed himself deep, her cervix struggling to keep him from breaking through. She dug her small nails into him but his skin was so thick she doubted he could even tell she was gripping him so tightly. He growled and thrust into her harder then she felt the hot pool of his seed filling her up. His hands held her body against him as he continued to release inside of her. Just knowing that he came for her made her feel ten times more satisfied.

He didn't pull out of her as he lifted her and laid down on his back with her on his chest. Her legs were shaky and she was completely exhausted but he didn't seem phased. His heart beat was still steady and normal while she was sure hers was beating faster than a tiny mouse's. He was still hard and huge inside of her but she didn't mind. She enjoyed the close contact.

She nuzzled against the bare part of his chest next to his armor and closed her eyes. She hadn't realized how much she had missed him even if he was gone for only a day. She had been so alone with no one to talk to and all she could think about was him. His claws ran through her hair over her scalp and increased her want for sleep.

"You were gone for a long time." She mumbled sleepily.

He trilled lightly and she forgot he couldn't understand her without his mask.

"N'yaka-de." She whispered.

"Dae'er." He corrected.

That was a word she understood perfectly. Alone. Her sleepy mind found it funny how his name was so incorrect now. From the moment he took her from earth, he would never be alone again. She knew he'd never give her up or leave her and she definitely didn't plan on

leaving him anytime soon. He was everything to her and without him she was certain she would die or worse. She smiled wearily.

“Dae’er.” She mumbled as her exhausted body could no longer stay awake.

Yautja Vocab:

N’yaka-de: Master

N’oelia: Cat

Chapter 7

Thank you all so much for the views and comments! I value every one of them and they are my motivation for continuing on with this story. You don't know how inspiring you all have been! Even those who only stop by for a visit and don't review, I value you as well! I hope you all are having a lovely Tuesday afternoon and if not, perhaps this chapter can help improve it!

Thanks again for choosing Devotion!

Disclaimer: I do not own Predator, Alien or any characters pertaining to the Predator, Alien or AvP franchise!

Dae'er watched No'elia gaze out the window of his ship in astonishment as they approached G'eru. It was an enormous multi colored green planet with a few splotches of blue. The planet was covered in a vast amount of dto with no deserts and it only had one large ocean. There were no intelligent beings on the planet but there were plenty of beasts and creatures of every size and shape. It was a perfect planet for hunting and he often visited just to be in solitude. He thought No'elia would enjoy one of his favorite places as much as he did. There would be a lot of flora and interesting objects she would've never seen on Earth.

His ship shook slightly as it eased itself through the planet's rings. No'elia slid her hand into his and squeezed it gently. She was much more trusting of him now and she seemed to be more affectionate as well. He'd be lying if he said he didn't enjoy his little ooman. Her growing sentiment for him was intriguing. He'd never known anyone to become so fond of something so quickly as she had. A few days ago, he would never have guessed that he would become so enamored by this small pyode amedha. He watched everything she did like he was watching a movie. When she laughed or smiled, he felt an overwhelming sense of satisfaction, when she was sad or in distress, all he wanted to do was alleviate it. She had become his greatest pleasure and there would be nothing that could stop him from indulging himself and her.

His ship made it's way on auto pilot to a set of coordinates that he went to every time he visited the planet. He had somewhat of a camp here and with a quick survey of the area, it would be a good place for No'elia to explore on her own. The planet might be empty of intelligent beings like himself and her but there were still carnivorous creatures that wouldn't hesitate a snack like his ooman.

He left his ship about twenty yards from his campsite and on his way out to the wilderness he set a carrier of supplies on the ground. He instructed No'elia to wait for him at his ship until he scouted the area. She watched him from the top of the ramp as he made his way through the four nok tall grass. He immediately scaled one of the enormous trees that created a canopy above the ground and quickly bounded through the tree tops. He was looking for dens that belonged to creatures that would be interested in his ooman or signs that they would

return. Aside from a few primates and large birds he saw nothing that would be too much of a threat. He promptly returned to his ship where No'elia still stood at the doorway.

"No'elia. Come." He said as he picked up the carrier and watched her run down the ramp to his side.

He had given her new coverings as he knew she would be more active out here. The bottoms were like the ones she had on her first outfit except this time he selected a lar'ja fur covered set. If for some reason she needed to blend into the foliage, the darkness would help keep her unnoticeable in the halkrath. The top was also more of what he wanted. It was a straight wrap around covering made of the same fur with no sleeves and left her midriff slightly revealed. It was the best he could find on such a short notice and he made a note to have custom ones made when he returned home.

He lifted her up onto the shoulder opposite of where his plasma cannon would go and he waded through the rangy grass. Her deknas were wide as they observed the canopies above them and when an animal would dash away from their approach, her head would spin around to that direction and watch as it frolicked away. She was quiet as she watched and took in everything new and exciting. A primate swung from one branch to another above them and she awed at the sight. He wasn't easily impressed. He had seen thousands of different primates on various planets and they were all the same. What was interesting, were her reactions, it was like she had never seen one before.

The thick columns of his campsite came into view as they entered an area that didn't have tall grass. Instead, the floor was covered in wood chips and decaying foliage from fallen trees. She followed behind him still admiring her new surroundings. He never thought anyone else would see his camp and he had been careless with it. Bones and th'syra and a medley of leftovers from his previous visits were on stone tables, hung from wires and made up most of the floor.

She entered his campsite like a cautious hooved animal, her primitive instincts working as intended. She was uncertain of the area as it showed u'sl-kwe had occurred to the other creatures that entered his camp. She looked at him with a confused look as he pulled out a few devices from the carrier that she would need while he was away.

He tossed one of them on the n'ithya and it expanded and opened to become a crate for holding fresh ju'dha he would get later. He set up a trip wire perimeter around the area. It would let him in and out but if something else passed through, an alert would go straight to his wrist gauntlet. The rest of the items were things he would need when he brought back the bounty from his kv'var. She watched in curiosity as he wrapped large chains with giant hooks over the wires he had anchored into nearby tree trunks.

"What is it you're hunting for again?" She asked as she looked inside the empty crate.

"They are called G'eru. Similar to your elephant creatures but much more massive and much more powerful." He said as he hung another chain.

"What are you hunting them for?" She asked as she turned her attention to a stray th'syra.

"Meat. Hide. Tusks. Every part of their body has a use. They are also very fast and move in a herd. It will take all of my skills to take one down." He said as he walked over and

pushed all of the old remnants of past prey off the center stone table. “Come, No’elia, you can sit here.”

She walked over and her nose wrinkled at the site of the dried thwei on the pale stone. She looked at him in disbelief and he laid a hand on the surface. He watched as the thoughts in her head shuffled. She was obviously checking the outcomes of her future actions as she determined which one to select. She sighed heavily and tried to heave herself up onto the table. He gave her a boost and her tiny hand hit a splotch of dried gore and she squealed in displeasure. He trilled at the comical sight of her trying to cleanse her hand on her coverings. He didn’t know why she was making such a fuss, it was only thwei.

“I need you to wait for me here. I already scouted the area and you will be safe as long as you don’t wander too far.” He pointed in the direction of a clearing. ‘Don’t go out past the tree line. You can walk around the area between here and my ship but stay where I can find you.’ He scaled a tree and loomed over her from the lowest branch. “I will return shortly.”

She called out in protest but he had already given her the instructions he had for her so there was no need to argue. He had to move quickly, the day would shortly end and he wanted to find the G’eru before the sun went down. The jungle planet was moderately warm during the day but at guan, the temperature would drop almost to zero. While it didn’t bother him, No’elia would certainly be affected by it.

He had chosen his campsite for a reason. Right before the G’eru migrated for hibernation areas, they would engorge themselves on the short grass clearings not too far from where he set up. He was far enough away for them to not smell him but close enough where he didn’t have to heave the body back for very long. His bio mask was picking up a large creature not too far from where he was and it wasn’t big enough to be a G’eru, but it was certainly large enough to stop and take a look.

He turned on his cloaking device and he moved quietly over the branches as he approached the animal. He immediately recognized it as one of the feline creatures that also hunted the G’eru. It’s fur was as white as snow and since it moved faster than any creature on this planet, it had no need for camouflage. It’s protruding fangs hung well below it’s chin, perfect for piercing through thick G’eru hide and latching on. He watched as it prowled in the same direction he was heading, it’s claws shifting through the n’ithya like a plow with every heavy footstep it took.

He normally didn’t hunt these beasts as they were too simple for him and usually never threatened him. They could always sense the bigger predator whenever he encountered one and would always sprint away. The fur was also not very desirable as it was coarse and brittle so the creature offered nothing he would want. He moved on through the branches emphatically, scaring the large feline so that it dashed through the dto, making sure it didn’t go in the direction his campsite was.

When his bio-mask picked up the G’eru, he slowed his movement as not to spook them. They were exactly where they were every time he came. Grazing the short sweet grass in preparation for the upcoming cold season. While the dto never got cold enough to freeze for very long, the cold season still occurred, changing the quality of the grasses and it’s nourishment. The G’eru needed a vast amount of grass for it’s rich vitamin properties and

without it, they would certainly perish. He moved to a small cliff that overlooked the herd, his usual perch when he wanted to study his prey.

He observed them, looking for the weak and frail ones that would be stragglers when he began his kv'var. There were hardly any young anymore but he didn't mind, he wanted a larger one, one that would give him more than he was looking for. He spotted a bitter male, with tusks as long as his body. It was thrashing about, slamming its long trunk into the n'ithya and stirring up dust. It was obviously looking for a dtai'kai'-dte and the others weren't giving him what he wanted. It was nudging at the other males, trying to invoke something out of nothing. The breeding season was well over so it was obvious it had some sort of mental disabilities and he immediately set this one as his target. Taking out the feeble ones was well within the honor code and this one was obviously a burden to the others.

He watched them for a little while longer, moving when they did and making mental notes of where he could find them again tomorrow. When the drop in temperature had become noticeable, he immediately headed off back to the campsite. He normally would sit and watch the G'eru all guan, making sure nothing frightened them into a sudden move but he couldn't let No'elia try and survive the cold alone. He was certain he would return and find her corpse. He chuffed. That thought bothered him more than anything. He didn't know what he'd do if he allowed her to meet Cetanu. He'd feel like he would've failed as a male and would certainly take a dishonorable end to his life.

She was no longer on the stone table where he left her but he could see her heat image off to the east. She had listened to him and stayed within the range of the ship and the camp site. It pleased him she was so confiding in him now. He jumped down from the branches, startling her into a stupor.

"Oh, god. You scared the crap out of me." She blew out in a ragged breath. "I thought something was jumping out to kill me."

"Then it would meet a swift death by my hand." He said as he approached her to see what she was looking at. "What have you found?"

"A flower. Look, it changes colors when you touch it with something. Red when my hand touches it and brown when I touch it with this twig." She said as she showed him the reaction of the petals.

He knew what this flower was. It was a mi flower. He trilled in satisfaction of his ooman's find as he reached down and carefully pulled the roots and vine's of the flower from its small spot in the n'ithya.

"This is a mi flower. Most flowers need soil, water and sun to grow but this one, it provides nourishment instead of requiring it. Wherever its roots embed into, whether its the trunk of a tree, the solidity of a rock or even the flesh of a creature, it will adapt and nourish and the petals will become the color of what it enriches." He set the flower on top of No'elia's hair and watched as its dark green roots thread through the strands of her dark hair.

When they skimmed through her scalp and into her skin she began to panic. "What's it doing? It's planting into my head!" She squeaked as she reached up to pull the flower from her head but Dae'er quickly stopped her small hands.

“It will not harm you. It will give you nutrients and sustain you. You will no longer need food to fulfill your vitamin necessities. The mi will provide it all for you.” He said as he watched the flower slip around the top of her th’syra like a headband with two large crimson blooms on the right side of her head. A few small budding ones also began to form, a sign that his little ooman was in good health.

“What does it look like? Am I bleeding?” She asked, still unsure of what he had done.

He let go of her hands. “No blood. Only beauty.” He said causing a smile to form on her face. “Come.” He motioned as he turned and headed for his ship.

She followed close behind him and when they got to the tall grass, he lifted her up onto his shoulder again. She had to weigh only a hundred pounds as he barely felt her small form on his broad shoulder. It was her small and vulnerable body that he liked second most about her. The first were her dark brown deknas, so big and full of her essence, he almost disliked that anyone could look at them. He wanted those vibrant and vigilant dark pools to only be gazing at him and just the thought of another admiring them had him feeling resentful. She was his, every last ounce of her being, was only for him.

He set her down in the hallway of his ship and she bounded for his bedroom. He adjusted the temperature so that it would be comfortable when the freeze set it. His ship was well insulated and would hold up from such dramatic temperature changes but he didn’t want No’elia to be uncomfortable.

This ship was his most prized possession, aside from No’elia of course. It was his reward for excelling in the ranks and he had upgraded with the best items and parts. He entered his room and she was buried beneath a pallet of fur with her head sticking out. Her fingers were trailing over the vines intertwined in her hair.

“Is it ok to sleep with this? I won’t crush it?” She asked.

“No. It’s part of you now. Whatever you do it can do as well.” He began to remove his awu’asa so he could bathe and No’elia jumped up and began shedding her coverings as well.

Her body was so lean and petite and he couldn’t help himself but to stare. Her breasts weren’t as big as Yautja females but he didn’t care, they were perfect to him. He watched as she dashed for the bathing pool that was much more simpler and smaller than the one in his domicile on Yautja Prime. This one was square and the majority of it was above the floor but the water still came up to his chest. No’elia climbed the stairs and splashed down into the ju’dha.

He could barely see her flowers above the side as she swam around. He increased the temperature of it slightly before removing his mask and following No’elia. He entered the pool and waded over to the side to sit on a raised bench. He relaxed into the corner and watched his ooman enjoy the warm bath as much as he was.

“Did you hunt today?” Her question surprised him. She had talked without him initiating which was, of course, against the master and companion rules. He wasn’t that bothered by it as she didn’t really seem like the definition of a companion that his kind used. She was more of a... cohabitant.

He didn't know what she was saying and she smiled as she realized he wasn't wearing his mask. Before, he despised her ooman talk but now he was just bothered that he couldn't understand her. She continued to try to ask him her question but this time with gestures.

"Hunt?" She asked using her hands like she was firing a weapon. Shoot? Fire? She used her hands to create what he guessed was a trunk then tusks and he realized she was asking about the G'eru.

"G'eru." He said and she repeated the word poorly.

"Hunt." The weapon gesture again. "G'eru?" She asked.

She must have been asking about him hunting the G'eru but he wasn't too sure what she was trying to ask about it. She sighed and mumbled something then continued to wade around. He thought for a moment then hopped agilely over the side of the pool and retrieved his bio mask. He put it on and switched the spectrum so he could see in her vision then he climbed back in the pool.

"Now. Speak." He instructed as he settled back into his corner.

"Did you hunt the G'eru today?" She asked.

"No. Only scouting. Tracking." He replied.

She bobbed in the center of the pool, her hair completely soaked now and making her look even more enticing. "Can you teach me some of your language?" She asked.

He was a little stunned but she couldn't tell behind his bio mask. She was willing to learn his language so she could speak to him. She had no idea how admirable that was. She was willing to change and adapt to him which was a complete breakthrough on her part. She was interested in his culture and it pleased him greatly beyond words. Just a few days ago she had no interest in anything that had to do with him or his kind but now she wanted to learn his language. He had to admit he was impressed.

"The basics." He said. "Yes is sei-i."

She repeated the word perfectly. "No is h-ko." He said slowly for her to understand.

She repeated both of the words amazingly and he purred in delight. "Hunt is kv'var." She struggled with the clicking sound but improvised but clicking her tongue. It was close enough that he knew what she meant but if she tried it on any one else, she'd be harshly judged.

"What about 'take me with you'?" She asked.

"Too much too soon. You'd never perfect such a large group of words. Just the basics." He replied.

She frowned but then softened her face into a smile. "What about good night?" She asked.

"Tei-i guan." He replied.

She seemed to favor that phrase as she repeated it over and over again. "What about the jungle outside? What do you call that?" She questioned, completely excited about learning from his teachings.

“Dto means jungle, forest or wooded area.” Watching her face as she perfected each word was fulfilling. She was so fascinated by the clicks of syllables that she laughed every time she failed to replicate the same sound.

“I want to learn more.” She stated.

He relaxed against the side. “That’s all for today. Tomorrow I will teach you five more basic words and then five more the day after. Just practice those for now.” He said as she waded over to him and sat beside him on the seat.

“One of the girls at the daycare told me that if you die that I will be killed and laid to rest with you. Is that true?” She asked as her small hands ran over his chest.

“It is. There is no need for you to live without me. No male would take you after you had been with me for so long. They like to find their own ooman. No need to fret, No’elia, I will care for you in death as I did in life. You are forever mine.” Her hand stopped and he watched her face shift into bewilderment.

“Yours?” She asked confused.

He narrowed his deknas at her as tried to figure out her thoughts. He wondered what she was thinking about his statement. Did she not want to be his? He wondered if her ooman sentiments were interpreting his statement into something more meaningful again. He chuffed in disapproval of her quietness. He didn’t like her being so lost in thought and not explaining her concerns to him.

“Why did you pick me?” She whispered. “There are billions of humans, why me?”

He cocked his head to the side. He hadn’t really picked her so much as happened upon her. It was fate or destiny, or call it what you will, that had decided their paths should cross that day. He just liked her for what she was then but now he enjoyed everything about her. He couldn’t tell her that though, she’d become melancholy. He had to carefully choose his words now.

“It was your appearances that intrigued me at first but then it was the way you made me feel. I was overcome by an undeniable need to be around you, to care for you and to experience you. You were a change that I needed in my life long ago.” He was satisfied with his explanation and he hoped she was too. If he has learned one thing about oomans, it was their fickle feelings about everything.

She leaned into his side and he placed his arm around her. She must have liked his choice of words as she nuzzled against his bare skin. It was easy to please her but also so easy to displease her. He liked the challenge of trying to balance the two feelings. It was like holding a thin eggshell that could, with the right pressure, crack or shatter but he didn’t want to do that, he wanted to keep her safe and together. It was completely different from the females of his kind. They were constantly shattering and angry, never even attempting to stay together and happy. Much more difficult to please.

“Why do you always say such wonderful things? On Earth, when a guy says such nice things it’s usually just what a girl wants to hear. Is that what you’re doing?” She said smiling up at him.

"I am an honorable male. I would gain nothing from lying and if I did, it wouldn't be reputable. What is life without dignity for oneself?" He replied. Her tone implied that she was speaking in a non serious manner but he wanted to make sure she understood that he would never tell her falsities. It was imperative that she understand this so she would greatly increase her trust in him.

She slipped her arms around him and hugged him tightly. She yawned and he took that as time to get out of the pool. He scooped her up and carried her in his arms out of the ju'dha. He stood over a vent on the floor that blow dried them and once he was satisfied with their dryness, he carried her into the room. He laid her on the bed and she scurried under the huge pallets of multi colored furs. Her thwei red flower stood out against her lar'ja hair and made her look even more stunning.

He placed his mask back on his awu'asa rack then laid on top of the furs. He only used the fluffy pelts for a cushion between the floor and his body but he thought it was charming of his ooman to use them as blanket. He tucked his hands behind his head and No'elia scooted over against his body. Her tiny hand laid over his chest and her smooth slender leg laid across the top of his hip. Her head used his arm like a pillow and after she settled in, he laid his arm around her. His arm was like another body as it encased her against him. He had never felt so protective before and her soft breathing was a constant reminder that she was nanku and that he had to keep her safe.

He awoke before No'elia, like always, and he replaced his awu'asa before heading to get her fresh ju'dha. Normally he would bring ju'dha with him but the ju'dha on this planet was so clean and fresh that he preferred it more than his own planet's. He left the ramp down for when No'elia awoke then he climbed a tree. The watering hole he used often wasn't too far from his campsite.

He raced over the limbs barely even settling his foot before quickly moving it to another. The sound of crashing ju'dha up head meant the ju'dha was close and he dropped to the dto floor. He approached the bank and looked down into the crystal clear liquid that had a waterfall cascading into it. He dipped his hand in and tasted it, still crisp and clean like he remembered. He pulled out a compacted carrier and expanded it then he drug it over the brim, filling it full. He pressed a button and the carrier closed, keeping the water from splashing out.

His bio mask began to alert him that something was coming. He didn't recognize the heat signature and he quickly turned on his cloaking device. He heard twigs snapping nearby and he swiftly scaled the closest tree with his carrier. It was another Yautja, one he did not know or recognize from his clan. The male was a Young Blood and was significantly smaller than he was. He adjusted his bio mask on a symbol he didn't recognize until he zoomed and saw the marking of a Bad Blood.

Pauk. This isn't what he needed right now, especially with No'elia not too far from here. This male's camp must have been close by as well but there was no way to tell if he had friends. He had somehow managed to obtain a plasma cannon which was even more troublesome for him. The last thing he needed were plasma blast holes in his ship or

anywhere near his camp. They were also close to the G'eru and a blast from a plasma cannon would certainly cause them to spook and flee.

He had to be careful with how he handled the situation. If he were alone, he would attack silently right now and end this fool's life but if he wasn't alone, then he'd have to figure out a new strategy. Pauk! He'd have to figure out how many there were and if the situation could be nullified now.

The Bad Blood finished with collecting his ju'dha, completely oblivious to Dae'er's presence as he foolishly led him back to his camp. Dae'er was right but his camp was even closer to the watering hole than he suspected. He must've just arrived during the guan or earlier in the morning since he didn't see him yesterday. His camp was just a makeshift one and Dae'er's worst fears were confirmed as he saw two more bad bloods improving the surroundings. He also recognized the familiar corpse of the feline creature he encountered yesterday, strung up and skinned with its hide burning on top of a fire. The males were clearly dishonorable, killing a creature that provided them with nothing.

He stopped behind a heavy layer of leaves as he sized up his enemies. The other two were bigger than the smaller one but no where near Dae'er's size and from their markings they were Blooded males. Those markings were obviously from their more honorable days so there was no telling what they had done between now and being cast out. They could well be into an Elite rank for all he knew. One of them seemed to be some sort of Brawler with dah'kte blades on each arm. He was the biggest of the three and obviously the one in charge. He gave the two smaller ones an order to scout the area and Dae'er watched as they headed off into the direction of his campsite. He had to get back now and he had to do it fast. The two Bad Bloods were moving quickly, obviously in a hurry to return.

He summoned every ounce of his speed as he leaped over branches to gain a lead on the Bad Bloods. He was going to have no choice but to dtai'kai'-dte these two and they would immediately summon their leader as soon as they saw him. He could call in reinforcements but they wouldn't make it in time. He'd have to control the situation before it spiraled wildly. The males were clearly discreditable and wouldn't hesitate to kill his unarmed No'elia on sight. He wasn't about to let that happen nor was he going to give up his favorite hunting planet especially not to Bad Bloods.

He had a good lead on the two males behind him and when he entered his camp, No'elia was sitting on the stone table waiting for him. He quickly descended to a lower branch and revealed himself to No'elia. She jumped up so innocently, unaware of the danger she was in.

"Dae'er!" She said in a chipper tone as she ran over to the base of the tree he was in.

"Hide No'elia! Head for my ship, NOW!" He barked at her and she scrambled off into the direction of his ship.

He cloaked himself again and watched as her tiny heat image disappeared fairly well into the tall grass. He had barely made it in time as the two males entered his camp on high alert. He watched them inspect the area and once they realized it belonged to another Yautja they immediately cloaked themselves. Unfortunately, their gear was terribly outdated compared to his and he could see them as if they never cloaked at all. His was upgraded specifically for hunting Bad Bloods and he would never show up on their scanners. It wasn't long before the third arrived and they all spread out in search of his ship. A foolish tactic, since it now put

Dae'er at the advantage. This was his camp, his territory and he knew every square inch of it by heart.

He decided to pick them off, one by one, starting with the smallest who was heading in the correct direction of his ship. He stalked through the branches, following the male closely observing his movements and determining which way he would swing his weapon, if he even had a chance to. When the male saw his ship, he opened his wrist gauntlet to mark the location and Dae'er dropped swiftly and quietly from above and drove his dah'kte into the male's back, severing his spine soundlessly. He revealed himself to the male and lavished in the h'dalk the male was putting off from the sight of his past prince ending his life. He retracted his blades and wrapped a wire around the male's neck then strung his corpse up high in the trees. The male may be experienced and skilled but he would've never been a match for Dae'er, no matter how much he had trained. He cloaked again and headed off into the direction of the second smallest. One down, two to go.

Kind of a cliff hanger, I suppose, but don't worry! I am already working on the Chapter 8 so you won't have to wait too long.

Yautja Vocab:

Ooman: Human

Kv'var: Hunt

Dah-kte: Wrist Blades

Dtai'kai'-dte: Fight/Battle

Awu'asa: Armor

Dekna(s): Eye/Eyes

H'dlak: Fear

Thwei: Blood

Th'syra: Skull

Pauk: Fuck

G'eru: Elephant like creatures

Dto: Forest, jungle or other wooded areas.

Nok: Yautja unit of measurement, equivalent to about a foot.

Lar'ja: Dark

Halkrath: Shadows

Guan: Nighttime

N'ithya: Ground, dirt, soil

Dtai'kai'-dte: fight/battle

Cetanu: Yautja's equivalent to the humans grim reaper

Mi: fuel

Ju'dha: Water

Sei-i: Yes

H'ko: No

Tei-i: Good

Chapter 8

Alright, I'll admit, the chapters involving Erie are getting shorter. I'm sure every one who writes can agree that sometimes there are characters that are just so much more easier to tell a story from. It's the same when you're reading, sometimes you just want to skip all of the other people and get to the good stuff! Writing is the same way! I'd like to apologize for posting this so late today, I had unexpected errands to run, you know how life is. Anyway! On to the chapter! and thanks again for choosing Devotion!

Disclaimer: I do not own Predator, Alien or any characters pertaining to the Predator, Alien or AvP franchise.

Erie had did what Dae'er told her to do and hid in the tall grass. She was going to go on the ship but she figured in there she would be cornered if something was coming to get her. From her hiding spot, she saw a stranger Yautja heading for Dae'er's ship and he opened his wrist computer to do something. Before he could press his finger into the screen, Dae'er dropped from the tree tops and impaled him with his huge hand swords. She watched in horror as Dae'er hung the dead guy from the trees then disappeared into thin air.

She guessed there had to be more since he didn't come to get her and she wondered how many more there could be. One? Three? Twelve? She wanted to find a better hiding spot. She crawled slowly through the grass on her hands and knees, heading away from the ship since it was obviously what they were looking for. She heard the grass rustling behind her and she scurried faster away from the sound. Her poor knees and hands collected every tiny rock and twig that was embedded into the soil. She sprang to her feet and broke out into a sprint, kicking it into high gear with fear as her fuel.

Her efforts were futile as her pursuer appeared in front of her to place a massive hand around her throat. He lifted her into the air and she kicked and thrashed around trying to get free. This guy's armor was horribly worn out, unkempt and had cuts and scrapes all over the metal parts. He looked as if he used to have the trophy rings in his dreadlocks but all that remained of them were indentions. He had symbols branded into his skin all down his arms. This guy was obviously not friendly and he didn't seem to care that she needed air to breathe either.

"Let go of me!" She wheezed out.

"Why would I want to do something like that?" The Yautja said.

He carried her writhing body back to the camp and held her up as he shouted, calling out to Dae'er as he walked slowly in a circle, presenting her like a prize. She winced and tried to suck in air through his tight grip but she was barely getting in enough to not pass out.

"I have your little pet! Show yourself and I will give her a merciful death!" This guy voice was rugged and brash. He sounded like he was talking through a mouthful of saliva.

Another stranger came forth and joined her captor at his side. This one was smaller than his friend and much more smaller than Dae'er. His armor was also not so worn down either, he must've been a new recruit.

"Where is Nightblood?" The big one asked the small one.

The small one shook his head and the big one roared in anger. Nightblood must've been the poor soul hanging in the tree and this guy didn't like Dae'er's gesture. Her captor took his fury out on her as he slammed her body into the center stone table and pinned her head against the rock. Her vision blurred and her head felt like it was submerged in water. She felt her furry bottoms being yanked violently down to her knees and the sight of his codpiece being laid beside her head set her defenses into overdrive. He was seriously trying to rape her right here in broad daylight?

"No!" She cried out as she made her legs go limp so he couldn't reach her bottom. Every time he lifted her back up she slumped back off the edge of the stone. The sound of his hand swords extending had her wiggling twice as much to try and get free.

"Be still, little bitch!" He growled out and when the cold steel hit the back of her neck she stopped abruptly.

She felt his fingers latch onto her butt and spread her open in preparation to jam himself inside of her.

"Dae'er!" She cried out as she felt the leather of his loincloth brushing against her backside. "Dae'er, help me please!" She wept.

Out of the corner of her eye, she saw Dae'er appear, followed by the sound of a fist hitting bone. The swords moved from her neck and she quickly climbed up and over the table to see her captor stumbling into a column from the blow he had just endured. The smaller one was already engaging in combat as he threw punches that Dae'er easily blocked with his forearms. He was nimble as he blocked a blow, through a left hook then another solid right hand uppercut into the small ones jaw. He went sailing into the air and landed on his back outside the camp, completely unconscious.

Erie ducked behind the stone table, peering out over the surface and watching the fight unfold. The big one composed himself as he extended both his swords on both arms. Dae'er retrieved his polearm and the two moved in a circle as they squared off. Eyeing each other and sizing one another up. The big one laughed and Erie couldn't believe he found something even remotely funny right now. She had seen her Dae'er in action, recalling the daycare incident, and his death stare was definitely not something to laugh about.

"Prince Dae'er, mated with a human." He laughed more loudly. 'I can honestly say I've seen it all now.' He paused then turned his conversation to her. "Did he tell you, human, of his past? How many human hunts he went on? His reputation is practically based on hunting humans and here he is, fucking one and claiming it like it's worth more than the dirt beneath my boots." He roared with maniacal laughter but his words were only infuriating Dae'er more. "After I'm finished watching your life fade away beneath my blades, I'm going to show your little human bitch what a real male is. I'm going to fuck her until she begs me to stop and then I'm going to fuck her some more. She'll be wishing she was dead when I'm finished with her."

“The only death here will be yours.” Dae’er said calmly.

The male cackled again. “Very well, Prince, introduce me to Cetanu in person.”

The stranger moved first, cloaking and uncloaking to appear behind Dae’er, trying to pull a sneak attack but Dae’er wasn’t so easily fooled. He swiftly set the end of his polearm into the dirt and used his hands to grab hold of his attacker’s arms. Once he had a steady hold on both of them, he head butted the stranger, cracking the guys mask in the process. The guy swayed around then shook his head to collect himself.

He wasted no time in charging at Dae’er again. This time he through haymakers wildly, trying to land any blow on her Yautja. Dae’er moved his polearm effortlessly, blocking every incoming swing. He looked so exotic and his skilled fighting had her watching in awe. He was so strong and impressive and he looked so alluring as he fought. His giant arms going to work and every muscle tightening and flexing as he moved. She slid down behind the table. God what was wrong with her? Dae’er was busy trying to save her and his life and she was lusting after him like a teenager. She peeked back over the surface. Well he did look damn good using that polearm.

The stranger’s swings slowed into more stronger and heavier blows and Dae’er angled his polearm on the next incoming swing and wedged the shaft between the guys two blades. The guy paused, obviously stunned by the situation but Dae’er wanted exactly this to happen. He turned the polearm, twisting and breaking the guys forearm with a loud spine tingling crunch. Even though she had seen plenty of compound fractures, the sight of the protruding bone made her feel sick to her stomach. Dae’er’s opponent wailed in pain but he showed the guy no mercy.

He removed his polearm and the guy grasped his broken forearm, still shuddering in pain. Dae’er knocked the guy off his feet with a swift kick to his stomach. Then he loomed over top of him and used his polearm to remove his unbroken arm from his chest and pinned it to the ground. Erie watched in horror as Dae’er placed his foot on the guys forearm and applied all of his weight onto it and with one quick heave, he broke the guy’s other arm. The victim cried out in more agony but he was still not finished.

“You threaten my female’s life.” Dae’er said as he extended his hand swords. ‘You try to belittle my honor in front of her.’ He took his polearm and drove the bladed end into the guys thigh. “Then you tried to taunt me with your intentions of forcing yourself on my female after your claim to send me to my death.” With one fell swoop, Dae’er sliced through bone and flesh, severing the guys leg clean off his body.

She cupped a hand over her mouth as she watched Dae’er torture this guy. Neon green blood gushed from the missing appendage. Dae’er moved to the other side of the male and pinned his other leg with his polearm like he did the first. The guy was whimpering and hissing but he no longer cried out in pain.

“You will pay for, not only your threats to my human, but also for the burden you brought upon our kind. You’re a disgrace.” Dae’er sliced through the second leg. ‘Dishonorable.’ He said as he cut off the guys arms. “A Bad Blood.” He growled out as he ended the torture by removing the guy’s head. Dae’er lifted it up by its dreadlocks and roared in triumph.

Erie was crying hysterically. The impressive fighting show took a turn and Dae'er no longer looked sexy nor alluring but frightening. She had never seen such horrid actions and she definitely didn't expect them from the male she trusted her own life with. Those same cruel hands had brought her so much pleasure and she couldn't believe they were the same. She knew Dae'er was a hunter and a killer but she never imagined anything like this. It was so nightmarish and so horrid and the sounds Dae'er's victim made would haunt her for the rest of her life.

She watched as Dae'er turned his attentions to the K.O'd Yautja. He was much more merciful with this guy as he drove his polearm through his head, ending it's life while it was unconscious. After he stacked the bodies, he poured a glowing blue liquid on them and they disintegrated almost instantly. He looked back at her then, with his trophy in hand, he walked over to her.

"No'elia." He said as he placed the head on a separate table. "It is safe now."

Was it? Was she truly safe with him? He approached her and looked down at her tear covered face. She couldn't help but cry more when he just loomed over her, covered in bright green blood. What did he expect her to do? Jump up and hive five him? Good job, you just violently killed a guy.

"Wh-why'd you torture him like that?" She sobbed out.

He didn't like her question as his tresses raised and his body stiffened. "He would've done the same to you if I were not here." He tried to say it calmly since she was upset but she could sense his anger easily.

"You don't know that!" She cried out. "You could've just—"

Dae'er interrupted her. "I do know, No'elia. Those males have no honor and that's the reason why they have turned rogue. They were dishonorable to their clans and sentenced to death but they managed to flee from their execution. They are Bad Bloods!" He was getting more and more flustered with disbelief at every word that came out of her mouth.

"Like convicts?" She asked, trying to understand the reason for the torture.

He paused. "Yes. Like convicts." He walked closer and took her head into his hands gently, wiping away her tears with his thumbs. 'It may have been cruel but he would've done worse to you and me. You must understand, No'elia, there are beings in this universe that aren't as kind as you are. There are beings that would prey upon your benevolence and when your back is turned they wouldn't hesitate to drive a blade through it, just because they could.' He let go of her face and headed for his ship and she quickly followed him. "Even humans have this horrible trait. Have you not encountered such cruelty on your planet?"

Of course she had, but not in the literal manner. Best girl friends stealing crushes, telling secrets and borrowing things to never give them back. Trivial, metaphorical backstabbing, things but she also never witnessed anything like torture. She had heard of monsters on tv taking children, raping women and murdering people of every age. Dae'er was being logical while she was blubbering over someone that would've probably kept his word and forced himself on her after killing Dae'er. She guessed she just thought that even if they committed crimes, they still should be treated like a person. Sometimes people couldn't help their urges or who they are, hate the action not the person, that kind of thing.

Her mother had always used that saying when Erie came to her with her problems involving other people. Her mother was right, she still loved her best friends even after they did her wrong and all of those criminals had families just like everyone else did. They loved the same as anyone else. She just never thought she would have to witness such harsh punishments.

She watched as he headed for the bathroom. He set all of his armor, excluding his mask, on it's rack then entered the pool. She stayed by the doorway, just watching and not saying anything. She should've been thankful that Dae'er had saved her life again, not moping and feeling sorry. She watched as he scrubbed the blood off his skin from the other Yautja. He didn't seem as concerned as she was, in fact, he seemed proud of his actions. Why should he feel anything else? He had protected her, defeated a threat and acquired a new trophy for his wall. Something like guilt was obsolete from his list of emotions.

"No'elia, you are still sulking." He stated.

"It's just that my mother raised me to value life. That's why I became a nurse, to help save others. Give them comfort in their last moments, provide a hand to hold while they're in pain and to watch them cherish life even at its end. It's just overwhelming to see how someone could so easily take away what someone else embraced so dearly." She said inhaling a hard breath.

"There is a difference, No'elia. You and most others live for the good in life, as one should, but there are those who choose to live without integrity. What right do those without principle have to take the essence from those who preserve their morality? Would you still feel compassion for the unethical if it were your family they turned upon with their indignity?" He rose up from the water with his hand out to her but when she didn't take it, he sat back down dejectedly. "What I do and what I've done is not out of hatred or cruelty, but to protect those like you, those who, in your own words, value life. Those Bad Bloods were nothing like the victims you encountered in your medical tendings. No amount of comforting and empathy could've saved them from their dishonorable fall from virtue."

Dae'er was right. There was no telling how many innocent people those Yautja killed or tortured and she was standing here, sobbing over their deaths like a naive fool. They probably destroyed families and shattered lives because they wanted to. Not because they couldn't help it. If they were truly sorry for their actions, they would've taken their punishment before running away from what was right. Did they deserve the horrible way Dae'er executed them? Perhaps not, but they did deserve something. A retribution that was obviously long over due. Dae'er cared for her greatly, that she could see, and he was only doing what anyone would do for those they cared for. If someone were trying to hurt or harm anyone she loved, she would do everything in her power to stop them, even if it meant severing a head.

She realized now that Dae'er wasn't just a hunter or a killer. He was a guardian, a soldier, someone who did what those like her couldn't do. If there was a situation that involved cutting off an appendage, he was the one that raised the blade. His disregard for his actions were so cold because he knew that if he didn't do what everyone else couldn't, than who would? She supposed after a while of cleaning up messes and giving the punishments that no one else wanted to give, had probably hardened Dae'er's soul into the calloused warrior he is now. Her respect for him grew immensely after her understanding. Her master wasn't just a master, he was a defender, a pillar in his society that everyone recognized was desperately

needed and without it they would crumble. His respect wasn't handed to him, like she first thought, he had earned it. Climbed to the top of a mountain made of skulls and bodies to rightfully reign over a mass of grateful people.

She reached over and lifted his hand to nuzzle her face into it. He caressed her and trailed his thumb over her lips. This was her master, her Yautja, and she felt like the luckiest woman alive to have such a respected warrior to warm her at night. All of her doubts and questions were reassured by his belief in life's purposes. If someone who killed almost everyday could tell the difference between who had virtue and who didn't, why wouldn't she believe them?

She pulled off her fur clothes and climbed into the pool and into his lap. He held her tightly, ran those massive and deadly hands through her dark hair and purred up a wondrous vibration through his chest against her skin. She truly felt safe and protected, and she never wanted to leave his gigantic warm arms. She traced her fingers over his broad chest then pressed her lips to them.

"Are you still going to hunt the G'eru?" She asked as she nibbled lightly on his tough skin.

He trilled softly. "Yes. I should leave soon." He said as he slid his fingers along her scalp and gathered up her dark brown locks.

"Maybe you could stay a little while longer?" She asked as she changed her position so that she was straddling him.

His animalistic sounds turned into more seductive ones. "If the time was used to satisfy your needs, then I have a lifetime to spare."

There we have it! Let me know what you guys think! Is Erie too soft or just crazy? Until tomorrow, friends! :)

Chapter 9

****EDIT:** I Just received a review from a Guest saying that I deleted their comment! I'd never do such a thing to any of my readers! I want to apologize to this person! I've only posted two stories on this site and I am still getting used to how it works. I immediately looked into the issue of your missing comment and I saw under "Reviews" that some of my readers comments needed to be approved! I wasn't aware this existed! I am terribly sorry to all of you that thought I had deleted a comment or blatantly ignored you! This is most absolutely NOT true! I appreciate every comment and review whether it's negative or positive. I hope no one has deterred from my work because of my ignorance on how to use this site . Once again, I am deeply sorry for anyone who thought I didn't appreciate them! I will check the reviews section often to make sure no ones reviews get left out! -A Baby Kitten**

Hello friends! TGIF, amirite?! Here's a nice semi-long chapter for you guys. Yesterday I was quite busy preparing for my vacation next month. I just bought tickets to Universal Studios Halloween Horror Night! So excited to go through that AvP Maze! (The only reason I bought the tickets :x lol!) I'd like to thank everyone that has favorited, reviewed and added me to their favorite author list! It's always great to see so many people enjoying my work. You guys are the best!

Thanks again for choosing Devotion!

Disclaimer: I do not own Predator, Alien or any characters pertaining to the Predator, Alien or AvP franchise!

Dae'er brought No'elia to the top of the cliff where he would observe the G'eru. She seemed very interested in knowing how he would hunt the beasts. She was busy examining his ki'cti-pa, running her fingers over the engraved metal like it was more of a decoration than a weapon. She could barely hold the weight of it when she lifted it to stand. He took it from her and retracted the ends.

"Will you use the polearm mostly or will you use your hand swords too?" She sounded like a young pup with all of her inquisitiveness.

"Wrist blades, and yes, I will try to use only my polearm since I don't want to ruin the flesh of the beast. I want to try to keep it as intact as possible." He explained as he began to descend the cliff.

"How are you going to do it? Right through the heart?" She asked eagerly.

He chuckled at her curiosity. It was almost as if she were ch'hkt-a to see him kv'var. "Just watch and see for yourself." He told her as he continued down the rocks.

She watched him like a hawk, peering over the cliff side. Her demeanor had changed suddenly, going from frightened little deer to a curious no'eli. She was finally showing the

traits of her given name. He cloaked as he got closer to the n'ithya and the G'eru didn't even notice him as he stalked the tree lines.

He zeroed in on the male he saw yesterday. It was still thrashing about hulij-bpe and he got out his ki'cti-pa but didn't extend it. Right as he went to move the herd into a run, a feline creature bound from the dto and startled the herd. Time to move. He dashed out, uncloaking as he did and ran alongside the thundering G'eru. He needed more speed to be able to move through them to get to where the charging male was. His target was much faster than most of them and it was exactly what Dae'er was hoping for.

He pushed his body and when he felt he was moving at the right speed, he merged into the herd, retracted ki'cti-pa tightly gripped in his hand. The creatures trumpeted and let out cries of help when they saw him, alerting the herd of his presence. He bobbed and weaved, threading through the massive tree trunk like legs. One of them took a swipe at him with its deadly tusks and he quickly shifted his position to the right, dodging its blow.

The amount of dust stirred up was blinding and the sound of their heavy foot beats was loud in his ears but he still kept up the movement of the herd. His bio mask identified his target 10 yards from where he was and he quickly scaled up the backside of one of the G'eru. He rode it crouched down on his feet and hands and when another moved up closer he leaped onto its back.

He continued to hop their backs until he was almost right beside the male. A smaller G'eru came running up beside the one he was on, frantically calling out and was barely making it through the herd. Before he could react, the small G'eru tripped and his mount trampled over the small one, causing its speed to greatly reduce. Pauk. He jumped down and pushed himself into high gear, shoving his feet to catch up with his target.

He reached the male and hastily climbed up its leg. He didn't like his new rider as he tossed his head around and tried to fishtail to throw him from his back. Pauk! He had to move from its back or he would certainly succeed in removing him. The last thing he needed was to be trampled beneath hundreds of G'eru.

He jumped to an adjacent male and this one was much more docile. He needed to slow the beast down before he could kill it. He stood up on the back of his current G'eru and with all his thar'n-dha, he thrust himself into the air, extended his ki'cti-pa and brought it down heavily between the shoulder blades of the male. Even with his weapon embedded into its back it still charged on, even Dae'er was impressed. He'd have to stop it another way.

He slid down the beasts broad th'syra and onto its right tusk. A normal animal would've become scared and tried to divert into the dto for safety but the look in this G'eru's eyes said setg'in not h'dlak. It tried to raise its massive head to throw Dae'er but he was much more swifter than the creature. He shoved his weight down onto the tusk, forcing it into the n'ithya like a brake. The male still pushed rapidly but his force only impeded him more. His tusk got deeply embedded into the n'ithya and he toppled over to his right, flipping onto his side. Perfect.

Weighed down by his own girth, the G'eru struggled to get right side up. Dae'er quickly retrieved his ki'cti-pa and thrust it hard through the back of the creatures th'syra, careful not to shove it all the way through and damage the bone. He gave it a good twist and the creature

stilled. The rest of his herd continued on without him, leaving him and the rest of the stragglers to their fate.

Dae'er looked back at the cliff and his mask zoomed in on No'elia. She was struggling to look at him through the dust but once it dispersed she waved at him frantically. The G'eru was large and luckily for him the herd had moved closer to his camp instead of further away like he had predicted.

He first went and retrieved No'elia and she followed him back when he went to get the chains to drag the G'eru to camp. She watched as he wrapped the hook and chains around the G'eru's ribs then he fastened them around his torso, making sure to distribute the weight evenly. He had a clear path through the trees that he had made long ago so he didn't have to dismember his kill. It was still kind of far but a lot closer than he had ever been before.

"Are you sure you can pull that?" No'elia asked.

"You doubt me?" He questioned.

"Never but wouldn't it be easier to use your ship to lift it and place it at your camp?" She asked.

He thought about it for a moment and it did make much more sense than beating his body to pull the massive beast. He stepped back and examined the area to see if his ship would fit. It would be close but it should work. He trilled delightfully at his little No'elia. She was able to figure out a more efficient way to move his prey in a matter of minutes while he couldn't do it in the hundreds of years he'd been doing this. She certainly deserved praise for this.

He unhooked his chains and bolted for his camp, scooping up a surprised No'elia as he went. She laughed and enjoyed his quick movements through the dto. Her beautiful lar'ja mane blew back in the wind as he held her thighs in his right arm. He brought her onto his ship then started it up and moved it over to the G'eru.

It was perfect. The chains latched on to the bottom of his ship's frame. He had no problem lowering the beast down on to the n'ithya and he set the thrusters to a hover as he jumped down and unfastened the body then scaled back up to the door. He couldn't believe how clever No'elia was. He clearly under estimated her but it wasn't entirely his fault, she had seemed more concerned with what he was doing rather than proving herself to him. There was more to his little ooman than he thought.

He had gut and stripped his kill of its hide and spread it out to dry between the columns of his camp. No'elia had her deknas covered but still stuck around. He began to remove the vast amount of meat, placing it in carriers for curing and storing. None of the creature would go to waste. The better and more desirable pieces of meat will be kept for meals and the other parts will be used for jerky. A kill like this would be a feast for his clan. The rest of the creature will be used for making tools, utensils and inlays for weapons as well as furniture pieces.

"Can you teach me?" No'elia asked.

"Teach you?" He questioned.

"How to hunt?" Her question was just as surprising as the one to learn his language.

Her body was certainly capable of becoming strong enough to take down prey. She had the want and desire but her compassion for living beings would be hard to get rid of. It was something that would take time to lessen. He supposed he could train her, teach her how to defend herself and thrive on a planet such as this one. She was small, so speed would be what she should specialize in. His father was the fastest male he had ever seen and because of that he used the dah'nagara as a weapon. Perhaps a custom set more of her size would suit her well.

"Yes. When we return, I will train you how to use your body to its full potential. When you are ready, I will show you how to take down prey." He said as he sliced through another part of the G'eru.

"Take down one of those?" She asked, still covering her deknas and smiling.

"Perhaps one day." With his training, he could definitely see her bringing down a G'eru of her own but first the basics.

The G'eru had been completely stripped and stored away and all that was left was the hide. He'd have to cure the leather side and wash the fur so that it was free of contaminants but it would make a fine rug for his front room back on Yautja Prime. He looked over at No'elia who was staring up at the sun in confusion.

"What is it No'elia?" He asked.

"What time is it?" She questioned.

"Time on this planet or your Earth?" His question brought a quick look from her. She obviously wasn't aware that her Earth time was specific to only that planet. "Time is unique to every planet and galaxy. Every sun sets at a different time while some never set at all. Your Earth completes a day much faster than this one or Yautja Prime." He said as he pulled a bag of curing materials from a crate.

"Wait. So just how much faster? Like hours?" She asked.

"What does it matter, No'elia? You will live forever, time isn't an extremity for you anymore." He said as he scooped up a handful of fine powder and rubbed it across the flesh side of the pelt.

"Just for kicks then." She replied as she climbed back up onto the stone table with her legs crisscrossed.

"You've been gone from your planet for about 535 Earth days but in my planet's time, it's been about five days." Her jaw dropped.

"You're not serious?" She asked and he didn't reply to her as he continued his work. Why would he joke about something like that? "Wait, does that mean that you're.. how old?"

"On my planet I am equivalent to thirty years of age on yours." He said scooping up another handful of powder.

"But that would make you," She paused as she added up the numbers. "3,214 Earth years old."

"Something like that." It puzzled him how precise oomans kept up with numbers.

“So you’ve been alive for a really long time.” She said still messing with the mathematical numbers.

“It’s not about how long you’ve been alive, No’elia, but what you do with that time.” He said as he brushed off the powder residue from his hands. “You can be alive for a million Earth years, but if you’ve done nothing to make it memorable, then it is wasted time.”

Her deknas showed her deep thinking process as she thought about his words then her face grew solemn. “I’ve done nothing with my time.” She said.

“I disagree. You said you were a medical worker. Your time went to those that needed you the most. I wouldn’t say it was nothing.” He said as he lifted a carrier full of supplies and headed for his ship.

“Yeah but a great deal of my life went to school and work. I wasn’t a nurse my entire life, only about six months.” She said as she followed him.

“If you chose to devote your time to academics then it’s also not wasted. Improving a skill, whether it’s physically or mentally, is still improving a skill. There are humans that may be stronger than you physically but you are stronger intellectually. Tell me, No’elia, do you have proof of your academic progressions?” He said setting the carrier into the cargo hold of his ship and turning to face her.

“Well, kind of. Degrees, diplomas, plaques from honor roll and such.” She explained.

“The work and practice you went through to earn those trophies required time. Just as my training required time. The G’eru and your academic rewards are proof that our time was not wasted. As I said, No’elia, it is not how much time you have but what you do with it that matters.” He said as he headed inside of his ship with No’elia hot on his heels. He closed up the cargo hold and adjusted the temperature for the approaching freeze.

“Now that you’ve hunted your G’eru, are we leaving?” No’elia asked.

“Not just yet. I have something to show you in the morning.” He said as he headed for the cockpit to check on the status of his ship.

“What kind of something?” Her small body was jogging to keep up with his stride.

“Something I think you will enjoy.” He ran his claws through her lar’ja mane and examined the mi flower. Another small new bud was forming.

No’elia tucked herself against his side and this time, he allowed her to stay. He was glad she was so understanding of everything he explained to her. Most oomans were stubborn and never would be able to throw out their own ideas to accept another’s willingly but she could. It was a sign that she trusted him deeply, as she should. He’d never lead her astray or allow her to live dishonorably. Everything she did would be a reflection of what he has taught her. She looked up from his hip and smiled a wide beautiful smile at him. He purred at her affections then pressed her tighter to his side. He no longer had doubt in his choosing her. She was exactly what he wanted.

The next morning, Dae’er awoke with No’elia looming over top of him. For the first time since she’d been here, she had awoke before he did. She pressed those soft ooman lips against the side of his mandible in an affectionate manner.

“Come on, let’s go see that something you wanted to show me.” She said in ooman as she tugged on his arm.

He trilled at her lack of strength to budge his body. “I need nourishment, No’elia.” He said in Yautja and she dropped his arm and retrieved his bio mask for him.

He put it on then repeated himself. Her deknas lit up then she dashed out of the room only to return moments later with a bowl containing a piece of meat. He eyed her in curiosity and she just looked at him happily. He wondered if she had gotten into his c’nlip by how lively she was acting. He removed his mask and promptly devoured the meat. He appreciated her gesture of fetching food for him but it was no where near enough to satiate his hunger. He rose from the bed and headed for the scullery.

“Where are you going?” She asked. By the look on her face, she was wondering what he was doing, so he pointed into the bowl.

She ran ahead of him and he watched as her body pivoted into the scullery. When he reached the room, he saw her placing a lot more meat into another bowl. What was his little ooman up to? Had she broken something? She came over with the new bowl and swapped out the empty one with it. Before she turned to put the bowl away, he grabbed her by her arm. She looked at him, confused, then she squeezed herself against his body, hugging him tightly. He let go of her and watched her put the bowl away.

She climbed on to the tall bench and waited for him to finish his meal.

“What are you up to, No’elia?” He asked in Yautja and all she did was try to repeat the words.

She was overly excited about something and when he put on his bio mask her questions poured out. He realized she was just ch’hkt-a and hadn’t done anything mischievous. Where were they going? What would they do? How long were they going to be gone? Did she need coverings for her feet? How much longer until they were back home? She was like a pup with all of her questions. He strapped on the last piece of his awu’asa then he quickly lifted her up and wrapped her legs around his waist. He pressed her against the wall and purred loudly. She quickly silenced her barrage of inquiries.

He trailed his hands over her soft neck down to her core where he rubbed her gently through her coverings. Her eyes fluttered closed and she let out a seductive moan. He preferred this sound more than the sound of her questions.

“No’elia, no more questions.” He said as he removed his hands from her core and placed her back onto the floor.

“Sei-i.” She said as she stood on weak knees. “No more.”

Satisfied with her silence, he led her out of the ship and through the dto. There was a place like the one he was taking her to on his planet. Most of the aristocratic Yautja used the area so if No’elia enjoyed it here on this planet, he would certainly take her on his planet, just to watch those snobby Yaujta writhe in displeasure. He lifted her up and positioned her onto his back.

“What are you..” She began to ask but he swiftly cut her off.

“No’elia, no questions.” He said as he scaled the tree to perch on the closest limb.

She gasped and clutched onto his neck tightly. He could’ve traveled on the n’ithya but through the trees was much more faster plus the chances of encountering an animal or something else was slim to none. He would teach her how to climb trees such as these and how to move through the foliage unnoticed. He had many plans for No’elia, plans that would certainly be taboo in his society but he would be showing her how to take care of herself. To him, that was well worth the judging deknas.

“Hold on tight.” He instructed as he leaped from his current spot to another.

Once he determined that she was able to get a good hold on him as he moved, he went a lot faster. Her tiny head was pressed against his back and he didn’t need to look at her to know her deknas were closed. She was so fragile and so afraid and because of it she was missing out on the beauty around her. The way she enjoyed her new surroundings when they first arrived led him to believe that she would certainly enjoy what he was seeing now.

Massive flocks of multi colored birds sprung to life from his commotion and would flee in a rainbow colored wave. There were tons of aromatic fruits hanging ripe on branches and primates that would glance over from a sleepy sit in the crooks of the branches. Entertainment was everywhere and she was too concerned about falling as if he wouldn’t catch her had she somehow managed to slip from his grip. She spoke of valuing life yet she only cherishes it in a sense of staying alive. His first lesson would be confidence.

He jumped to the n’ithya and set No’elia down. She gasped in awe at the new place. Steamed rock pools, that were perfect for bathing and enjoying, were sprinkled out amongst blackened stone. He had discovered them long ago and would always visit on his last day here.

“Are they safe?” No’elia asked as she approached the closest one.

“Avoid the bubbling ones. Those are boiling and would be too hot for your skin.” He said as he walked over and lifted a warm rock off the side of the pool No’elia was admiring.

She first ran a hand through the clouded ju’dha then she slid her feet into it.

“So warm. It’s like a hot tub.” Her reference didn’t make any sense to him. All bathing pools were hot. “I can’t really see into the water.” She said swirling her tiny feet around causing the murkiness to clear away.

“There are creatures who enjoy the warmth as much as you do.” He said as he walked over to another pool with the stone and tossed it in.

No’elia craned her neck to watch. A large serpent creature moved around in the pool, it’s entire body taking up the large space. Forest colored scales slightly appeared over the brim and No’elia gasped.

“It won’t harm you unless you enter the water. These are its hunting grounds, it preys on unsuspecting creatures that come to the pools for warmth during the night.” He said as he watched the serpent settle from his disturbance.

“How big is it? Because that thing looked huge.” She said.

“A comparison you would understand would be: it’s as long as the whales in your oceans but it’s no thicker than your arm.” Her deknas widened at his description. He laughed at her reaction. “I would never let any harm come to you. Have I not proven that already?”

He watched her deknas soften as she silently agreed with him. He crouched down beside her and watched her strange ooman feet move. They were nothing like his. The claws were short, thin and flat with five toes while his only had four toes with a fifth off to the side, perfect for moving through trees and the slight webbing made him a superb swimmer. Her feet had no webbing and the toes were all aligned, he wondered what purposes they had.

He slid his hand down her leg and pulled it up out of the ju’dha. He examined her tiny feet and when he trailed his claw over their soft underside she laughed then pulled it away.

“What are you doing?” She giggled as she stuck her foot back into the ju’dha.

“What purposes do your feet have?” He asked.

“Walking, running, kicking. The same as yours I suppose.” Her face changed into uncertainty as she looked at his feet. “Well, maybe not completely like yours.”

“How can you climbed trees without claws?” He asked.

“Shoes, there are special shoes for climbing but some trees can be climbed with regular shoes. Some people can even climbed ones without shoes. I used to be pretty good at climbing trees but I guess I found other ways to occupy my days.” She laughed.

He didn’t understand. “What did you occupy your days with when you decided you no longer needed to scale trees?” He asked.

“Well I was a kid when I liked climbing trees and doing all of that outdoorsy stuff. I could do cartwheels and back flips. I was pretty rambunctious but I guess as I got older I preferred being inside or going places not outside.” She explained.

He thought that was silly. Why stop being unfit just because you got older? That should make one want to increase their outdoor activities. He saw something shift beneath the water and he took the opportunity to teach her his first lesson. “When you are young your parents will show you how to do things. Talk, walk, eat and bathe as well as other things but most of the knowledge comes already engraved into your instincts. A child being afraid of the dark even though they were never told to be. Being weary of a stranger even though your parents might’ve known the stranger all of their life. Basic survival instincts that don’t need to be taught. Perhaps, your want to climb trees, be physically fit and able to perform activities as a child that you can no longer do, was part of that instinct. Your body and mind knew you’d need to be able to do those things to survive.” He explained.

“I guess that’s one way of looking at it. Humans don’t really have any predators on Earth aside from illnesses so maybe those instincts fade away from not having to use them and focus on other areas.” No’elia stated.

He chuffed. “Nonsense. If that were so, evolution would’ve given you what you needed and since that intuition still exists you must need it for some reason. Would you trust every human with your offspring?” He asked, keeping his deknas on the water.

“Absolutely not.” She chimed.

“Exactly. Your child would come equipped with that knowledge of you not trusting everyone. It’s basic survival instincts, No’elia, you never truly lose them and with training and experience you can enhance them. It’s what my kind has done. We embrace what was given and not try to forget it. You will need to focus on your buried instincts if you are to train with me.” He said as he stood.

“How do I do that?” She questioned.

“The water. Why did you ask if it were safe to place your feet into?” He asked.

“I couldn’t see through the murkiness.” She replied.

“It’s more than that. Why else?” He continued as he lifted another stone from the first pile.

“I’ve never been here before?” She was unsure of her answer but he was getting the one he was looking for.

“What else, No’elia, why were you hesitant to place your feet into the water?” He kept pressing her.

“This planet, it’s alien. There could be things that would kill me.” She answered.

“Then why, No’elia, are your feet in the water right now?” He walked over to the edge of the pool and prepared to drop the stone into the ju’dha.

“You told me it was safe.” A look of h’dlak came onto her face.

“I told you to avoid the bubbling ones.” He replied as he dropped the stone into the ju’dha.

The residing serpent shifted and No’elia screamed. The serpent’s body wrapped around her tiny leg, trying to pull her into the ju’dha but Dae’er was already reacting. He extended his dah’kte and with one swift motion he cut through the part that was wound around No’elia. She scrambled away from the pool, kicking off the dead part of the serpent as she went. The creature rose from the pool with its massive fanged jaws opened in preparation to strike at whoever sliced off part of its body. Dae’er reached out and grasped it beneath its apple sized head and with one shove of his thumb, he snapped its head off its neck. The dead serpent slid back into the pool and Dae’er turned to face No’elia. Her heartbeat was rapid and a look of h’dlak and anger filled her features. She sprung up to her feet and shoved weakly against his stomach.

“Why didn’t you tell me?” She shoved him again. “Why did you let me put my feet in there with that snake?!” She shouted, beating onto his chest with her tiny fists.

He allowed her to take her anger and frustration out on him until she couldn’t any more. He reached up to thread his fingers through her mane and she pulled away from him.

“I did not know it was in there, No’elia.” He said.

“Like hell. You knew the other one was in there!” She exclaimed.

“Only by dropping the stone in there, did I know of its presence.” Her face still had anger on it but he could tell by the shift in her demeanor that she had realized his first lesson for her. “Never ignore your instincts, No’elia. You disregarded them because you have become

comforted by the ignorant idea that your kind is superior but that increased intuition is what will keep you alive.”

He knelt down and gestured for her to climb up on his back. After a while of her hesitating, she mounted him and wrapped her smooth arms around him. His first lesson was harsh but after years of experience in training others, he found that tough lessons were always the ones that were most memorable. He needed her prideful ooman arrogance to be stamped out. While she was correct in the fact that, on her planet, oomans had definitely reached the top of the food chain but it was only because they were intellectually superior than Earth's other inhabitants. On this planet, on Yautja Prime and in the rest of the universe, she was the last link on that chain. The sooner she understood this, the better her mind will be for molding. She will kv'var and dtai'kai'-dte with her life and for no other reason. Each swing of her weapon will be from her soul's desire to live. This is what would separate her from the rest of her kind. This is what would make her a sain'ja.

She was quiet on the trip back and when he set her down, she didn't skip happily for his bedroom like she normally did. She just stood there in silence, his lesson obviously causing her to reflect, which was exactly what he wanted. He walked over and stood in front of her.

“Am I stupid?” She asked with sorrow in her tone.

“No. You were just led down a wrong path.” He replied.

“I'll never be strong like you.” She said.

“Our bodies are different. You will never be as physically strong as I am but your mind is more than capable of learning. I will train you and teach you how to utilize that ability. Your body's physical strength will come later but for now, you must train your mind. You need to stay focused and alert if you want to be strong.” He headed for the cockpit and No'elia followed him.

“Are we leaving?” She asked.

“Yes. You've become my newest challenge. I want to begin your training as soon as possible.” He said as he started up his ship.

She moved to a passenger seat against the back of the wall. He had never heard of a companion being trained to dtai'kai'-dte before, in fact, that was exactly what his society didn't want. They liked oomans to be docile and obedient but he wanted to see if he could train No'elia. To show that even with strength and training that she would still flock to his side and be loyal to him. He was certain that she valued him as much as he did her. If he could shape her into a worthy sain'ja than she be become his greatest achievement. He pictured his No'elia bringing down her own prey and he felt an immense feeling of pride. He would put all of his time into her to make sure she would be his greatest student.

A lot in store for our little No'elia but I think she'll make it :)

See you soon!

Ooman: Human

Kv'var: Hunt
Dah-kte: Wrist Blades
Sain'ja: Warrior
Dtai'kai'-dte: Fight/Battle
Awu'asa: Armor
Dekna(s): Eye/Eyes
Dah'nagara: Shortsword
H'dlak: Fear
No'eli: Cat/Feline
C'nlip: Intoxicating Beverage, much stronger than human alcohol.
Ki-cti-pa: Combi-stick
Th'syra: Skull
Setg'in: Deadly
Pauk: Fuck
G'eru: Elephant like creatures
Dto: Forest, jungle or other wooded areas.
Lar'ja: Dark
N'ithya: Ground, dirt, soil
Mi: fuel
Ju'dha: Water
Sei-i: Yes
ch'hkt-a: Hyper/Excited
hulij-bpe: Crazy
thar'n-dha: Strength

Chapter 10

Hi friends! Sorry it's been a while before posting but it doesn't mean I haven't been writing. So today, two chapters..maybe three..depending on these World of Warcraft servers lol! So here you are, two chapters that I hope you enjoy and made the wait worth while. Thank you to all of my new followers and favorites and the reviews. I greatly appreciate every single one of you and thanks again for choosing Devotion!

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"I can't do it anymore." Erie whined out as she dropped to the floor with her two daggers in hand.

They'd been training for almost two weeks and she was already burned out on it. It wouldn't be so bad if Dae'er didn't want to train 24/7 or however long Yautja days are. In the morning, training. After lunch, training. Before bedtime, training. Her muscles weren't even given a chance to relax before they had to work again.

"You asked me to teach you how to hunt and fight, No'elia. Have you changed your mind already?" He questioned.

"No, it's just that I need, like, a day to recuperate. I've worked out so much that I can barely lift my arm." She said as she demonstrated her shaky hand.

"If you can successfully land a blow with your daggers then you shall have one day. There is no reason for reward if you have not progressed." Dae'er walked over and tossed a training polearm onto the magnetic holding of the weapon rack.

"Fine. One blow. One day. Easy." She jumped up and held the daggers in her hands the way Dae'er had taught her, one turned sideways in front of her and the other held off towards her backside for a quick attack or a safe block.

He nodded at her and she advanced at him rapidly. She tried immediately for a thrust at his side and he quickly knocked away her forearm. The contact on her sore muscles had her wincing but she pushed through the pain. She spun around to throw a weighted slash against him but he easily dodged her weary attack. She thrust a high attack but he used his wrist to stop hers. She tried a low jab but he also blocked that one.

This was going terribly. She was far too weak and way too tired to focus. She supposed that was his point though, wasn't it? She stepped back, breathing rapidly and stared at him. She let out a hard exhale then tried again. This time she summoned all the strength she had left and unleashed a flurry of rapid attempts to strike him. Left hand, right hand, both hands but no matter how fast she was, he was incredibly faster. She couldn't help but feel like he was being too hard on her.

She tried a fake out by trying a attack at his waist and while he blocked that one she used her other weapon for sneak attack at his leg. He was far too focused though and blocked them both. She growled in anger and stepped back away from him.

“This isn’t fair!” Her voice echoed through the training room.

“It isn’t about fairness, No’elia, it’s about perseverance. If you are injured, ill or have multiple enemies coming at you, it will seem as if it isn’t fair. Your weariness does not matter to those that wish harm upon you. You must be able to stay focused and ready to fight for your life.” Dae’er explained.

“I just can’t focus when my muscles scream at me every time I move them.” She stated as she looked at the bottom of her forearms. They hurt so bad she was sure there was a bruise somewhere.

“This is why we are training. We are conditioning your body, preparing it for endurance. You may have half a day.” Dae’er said as he headed for the exit.

Erie tossed her daggers onto the wall then quickly followed him and tucked herself against his side. He now allowed her to walk with him like this instead of with his hand on her neck. Other Yautja would stare but Dae’er had said if he was going to break a rule by training her, he might as well break all of them.

He still left her in the daycare while he went on royal duties but she didn’t mind. Her and Seleana had become really close friends and she enjoyed conversing with a human every now and then especially another girl. The babysitter that Dae’er had nearly killed was relocated to some other trivial job and now a female Yautja watched them. Dae’er seemed more comfortable with their selection since he was easily agitated whenever any male looked her way. She wasn’t sure why they just didn’t put a girl babysitter in here to begin with since there were nothing but female humans in the daycare.

Dae’er ran his fingers down her cheek, his way of saying goodbye or hello, then he left her in the daycare. Seleana gestured frantically for her to come over and Erie grabbed a purple jelly fruit from a bowl and plopped down on the couch beside her friend.

“Oh my god, girl. You have to see this.” Seleana tilted her head slightly to her left trying to discreetly show her something.

Erie looked around the room and did a double take when she saw a girl with a protruding belly. She looked at Seleana with a look of bewilderment on her face.

“Is she?...” Erie questioned.

“Yes, fruit! I’ve been here five hundred years and I’ve never seen a pregnant human before.” Seleana said as she peeled her own jelly fruit.

“Is it Yautja?” Erie asked.

“I don’t know. She’s not talking. I guess she’s a little embarrassed. I mean look at her, her Yautja is a Young Blood and he didn’t even give her proper clothes. She’s been huddled under that fur since she came in.” Seleana bit into her jelly fruit.

“Does that mean that it’s possible for us to become pregnant?” Erie questioned as panic rose up inside of her.

"I don't even know anymore. I mean five hundred years of girls coming and going and I've never seen one pregnant girl. Not even me, and my Yautja be using my body multiple times a day." Seleana stated as she watched the pregnant girl lay down on the couch.

"Maybe she was already pregnant when they took her?" Erie suggested.

"Nah, I've seen her in here before, like way before. Not as often as you and me but frequent enough to know that she wasn't pregnant. That baby is definitely new." Seleana bit into her jelly fruit again.

Erie felt sick. She liked Dae'er and even loved being around him and having sex with him but just the idea of getting pregnant by him had her stomach rolling. She liked kids, she had no objections to kids. She had to like them somewhat since she was a nurse back on Earth but an Yautja baby? She looked at Seleana who didn't look as worried as she did.

"How would you feel if you were her?" Erie asked gesturing at the girl sitting across from them.

"I don't know. I guess I wouldn't care too much. I've been alive since forever and sometimes a girl just gets an urge for a baby, you know? I think I'd be alright with it. My master is getting old and he's not as entertaining as yours. A baby would definitely be something to occupy my time with." Erie looked at Seleana and tried to determine if she were serious.

The girl always joked around so much that Erie always had to look at her face to make sure she was serious. When Seleana's face went from gazing to longing she knew she was dead serious. She kind of felt sorry for Seleana. She had become so alone and so desperate that she didn't see anything wrong with having an Yautja baby growing inside of her. On the other hand, Erie understood how sad it must be to just be someone else's entertainment and never having anything to call your own. Erie wrapped her arm around her friend and hugged her close to her.

"You should ask him." Erie whispered.

"He's lenient with a lot of things but something like that? He'd never agree to it." Seleana replied.

"Well it doesn't hurt to ask." Erie smiled at her.

If Seleana wanted an alien baby then who was she to judge her. Maybe she actually loved her Yautja. Five hundred years was a long time to spend with someone without growing attached in some way. Erie had been around Dae'er for almost three Yautja weeks and even she felt a growing attachment for him. Was it possible for her to love Dae'er? Of course, she was never judgmental when it came to something as rare as love. It made her wonder if Yautja felt love like humans did or if they just plateaued at certain feelings.

"How's it going with your prince?" Seleana asked as she moved away from Erie's hug.

"Oh you know, same old same old. Training. Conditioning. All that jazz." Erie said as she walked over and fixed her a cup of water.

"You're so lucky your Master likes you as much as he does. I wish mine would do something other than explore my nether regions." Seleana said.

“Well, he still does that.” Erie replied as she handed Seleana the cup.

“Los hombres son todos iguales. Doesn’t matter what planet they’re on.” She said as she took a sip.

“Isn’t that the truth.” Erie said as she took a swig from her own cup.

After a few more weeks of harsh training from Dae’er, she could finally tell a difference in her body. She even had the makings of some nice abs going on. Dae’er had started hand to hand combat with her and discovered, with some excruciating trial and error, that her bones weren’t as dense as his. He had some custom armor made for her and she was still trying to break it in.

She had black shin guards that were made out of some hard metal material and was cushiony against her smooth skin. They wrapped all the way around her legs and she had to admit they looked pretty sexy on her. He also had some armguards made for her out of the same material and they had attachable fingerless leather gloves for gripping the handles of her daggers. She was extremely happy about those since her hands began to callous from the heavy metal.

On top of her new armor pieces, he had also splurged and had some better coverings made as well. No more leather or fur, her breastplate was like a belly shirt that had a collar like a turtle neck. It wasn’t made out of the same metal material as Dae’er’s but it was still some sort of hard, almost plastic, material. The bottoms were much more simple and she began to notice that Dae’er enjoyed a bikini bottom on her. They were made out of a mesh material so it was breathable but some of the hard plastic pieces still adorned the majority of it.

She had to admit, she felt like a warrior in this new attire. She had also began to tie her hair back in a ponytail for training but Dae’er didn’t like it and he would constantly pull out the tie to release her long locks. She had become quite adapted to using her daggers but she was still unable to land a blow on Dae’er.

“Focus, No’elia.” Dae’er’s voice was loud and brash.

He came at her rapidly, throwing a right hook that she quickly blocked. He really liked testing the material of her armor since every time she blocked a blow it became more and more painful. He threw a left hand lower cut and she quickly clasped both her hands together and brought them down onto his fist. He shot his right hand out to grab her throat and she used her right palm to thrust his arm away from her.

His left hand came at her and she locked it under her right arm and she tried to throw a swift left hand punch at him but he blocked it easily. His right hand came at her left jaw and she wasn’t fast enough, it connected and she was thrown onto the floor. Before, she would sob and cry out in pain but she had grown accustomed to his blows. He didn’t put all of his strength into his punches but he put enough that wherever he hit would be bruised for a week. Her jaw was already feeling swollen.

“Are you hurt?” He asked as he knelt beside her and inspected her jaw.

“It’s alright, I’ll live.” She said as she stood and wiped sweat from her brow.

“Remember to focus on both hands. Not just one.” He instructed.

“Yeah, I know.” She sighed out.

She always got bummed out when she missed a block or a hit or anything else that she had slipped up on. Dae’er was a great trainer and there was no reason that she should still be missing such easy blocks. She hated disappointing him, he put so much time into her and she was still struggling on the basics.

“May I go to bed?” She asked him dejectedly.

He nodded and she exited the training room. He was becoming better at picking up her emotions. When she was angry he would try to calm her and make her happy. When she was sad, he would force her into a cuddle session and purr that wonderful relaxing purr to soothe her. If she was excited he’d take her for a stroll around the building, showing her off and gloating in the stares from the snobby Yautja.

She was sure that after her quick bath that he would pull her into those fluffy furs and cover her with his body. She had even mastered some of his language and outside of training, she’d request that he leave his mask off so she could speak to him. She also just enjoyed hearing him speak that alluring language, so much so that she would often request that he tell her stories as she went to sleep even if she didn’t fully understand it.

After her bath, Dae’er came in and bathed as well then he joined her in his massive bed. She laid beside him and just admired his features. His piercings were actually quite sexy and she liked when he left his mask off when they had sex so she could see him. Their recent intimate sessions had become much more gentler since he was so rough on her in the gym. She didn’t mind, she loved going slow so she could enjoy his huge thickness.

“No’elia, I have a gift for you.” He said in Yautja.

She looked at him in surprise. He didn’t normally give her gifts. The armor was kind of a gift but she felt like it was more of a necessity. She sat up and watched as he got out of bed and pulled a box out from under it. She watched in curiosity as he popped the latches on the metal box and opened it. He turned it and showed her the contents.

Her mouth opened in a gasp when she saw two new black metal daggers. The blades looked razor sharp on both sides and the tip looked just as deadly. The handle was wrapped in a black leather and a crimson gem adorned the end of the handle. She picked one up and was amazed at how it felt weightless and contoured to the size of her hand. She immediately recognized the engraving on the blade.

“It’s a no’eli.” She said chuckling at the engraving of what looked like a leaping jaguar.

“For my no’eli.” He said.

“These are perfect. I can’t believe you had these made for me.” She stated as she lifted the other and gave them a quick test by turning them over into attack mode.

“Here, also this.” He said as he lifted the material that cushioned the blades and pulled out two black leather sheaths with straps. “They wrap around your legs.” He reached over and extended her smooth slender leg out and began strapping one of the sheaths on.

It wrapped around her thigh with two straps and had a belt like buckle. When it was secured comfortably he took one her daggers and slid it into place. It clicked and locked into the sheath.

“Magnet inside so it doesn’t slide out with movement.” He said.

The daggers made her legs look even more sexy and she couldn’t believe Dae’er would give her such an amazing gift, even if she wasn’t that great with them yet. She still felt like she had a long way to go.

He picked up her hand and nuzzled it against his face. He raked his claws lightly along her thigh as he leaned over top of her, his red and black dreads falling over his shoulders. She reached up and glided her hand over his massive chest and he rumbled an erotic growl. He gripped onto her hips and yanked her down to the edge of the bed.

Just as she began to rub her legs over his muscular thigh, someone at the front door diverted his attention. He looked down at her and she could tell he was debating whether or not to just ignore whoever it was and continue with her. The sound of the alert went off again and he growled impatiently then strode over to the door. Erie jumped up and peeked out from the bedroom.

She saw another Yautja male, clearly a servant by the lack of rings in his hair. She could barely make out what he was saying. She only understood every other word. She did pick up that it was about Seleana’s Yautja and Dae’er’s tresses raised at a word she didn’t recognize. Her first thought was that Talia was at it again. The servant saluted Dae’er then dispersed.

“What’s wrong?” Erie asked as Dae’er came back into the bedroom and began putting his armor back on.

“The ancient, U’t’h’ri, has grown ill. They believe it won’t be long before he greets Cetanu. It is customary for those of high rank to watch him transcend.” Dae’er said as he attached his wrist computer then placed his mask on.

“Can I come? Seleana is my friend.” She asked.

Dae’er stared at her a moment, mulling over her request. “Get dressed. His companion will be waiting at the station.”

She quickly placed on her armor and when she went to place her other dagger on, Dae’er stopped her. “Another time.” He said as he removed the straps from her current one.

Dae’er left her at the daycare before departing in a hurry but not before nuzzling her in adoration. The daycare was completely empty except for Seleana who was huddled up at one end of the couch she always sat on.

“Seleana?” Erie said quietly and when Seleana saw her she quickly wiped away tears.

“Hey, fruit.” She sniffled and sat up to act like she was composed. “What’s going on? What are you doing here so late?”

Erie frowned at her as she sat down on the couch. He opened her arms and after hesitating a moment, Seleana threw herself into Erie’s embrace. Her friend sobbed loudly and the feel of her tears on her skin were cold. She soothed her and stroked her hair.

"It's that bad, huh?" Erie asked.

She felt Seleana nod. "He's just old, you know? I don't know if I'm more sad about losing him or because I'll be next."

Erie had forgotten about the "I die, you die" part of the companion deal. Seleana was her only friend here and Erie didn't know what she would do without their friendship. She would definitely miss Seleana's chipper attitude. She was the one that told her everything she needn't to know about the Yautja. Without Seleana, she never would be as comfortable as she was now with Dae'er.

"Maybe he's just ill. Maybe he'll pull through." Erie tried to cheer her up but Seleana had been alive for 500 years, she knew when things were bad and when they weren't.

"He's never been this bad off. He's been sick before but not like this." Seleana's sobs had quieted but her voice was still solemn.

"What are they going to do to you if he dies?" Erie asked.

"My master told me that they would euthanize me. Like how they do with dogs." She said looking up from Erie's chest then tucking her head back against her. "He said it would be quick and I wouldn't feel anything."

"Isn't there something we can do? Maybe someone else can take care of you." Erie questioned.

"Nah, fruit, if my master dies so will I." Erie hated being so helpless. There was absolutely nothing she could do to help her friend.

A few hours later an unfamiliar Yautja showed up and was talking to the baby sitter. She turned and looked at Seleana then motioned for her to come over to the fence. Erie hugged her tightly and Seleana pulled away first. She smiled at Erie and more tears gathered at her brown eyes.

"See ya around, fruit." Seleana said as she stepped through the metal detectors.

The strange Yautja placed his hand around her neck and Erie watched as her friend broke down again. She cried hysterically as her escort took her away. Erie dashed over to the fence and watched through the holes until she could no longer see Seleana.

This wasn't happening. Seleana couldn't die, she was the only person that kept her sane in this place. She grabbed a hold of the fence and the baby sitter grunted. She wanted Dae'er, she didn't want to see her only friend being taken away to her death. Surely Dae'er could do something, he was the prince.

She shook the fence violently. "Dae'er!" She shouted.

The baby sitter hissed at her, a threat to move away from the fence but Erie wasn't in the mood to be obedient. She rocked the flimsy grate again, this time putting all of her strength into it.

"Dae'er!" She screamed. She wasn't even sure if he could hear her or if he was nearby but she needed comfort, she needed him.

The baby sitter grabbed the scanner gun thing and approached Erie rapidly. The female Yautja shot her hand out to grab her but Erie easily blocked and knocked away her attempt. The baby sitter looked at her in bewilderment like she couldn't believe she had just denied her so effortlessly. The baby sitter was angry now and tried again to reach out and grasp her throat but Erie's training was proving fruitful. She used her palm to forcefully knock the females thick forearm away.

"Obey!" The females voice sounded more manly than before as she swung her arm to wrap around Erie.

Erie ducked and rolled away from her heavy swing. The female was in a full on rage now as she went over to her console and slammed on a button. A light flashed in the daycare room and within seconds two Yautja males appeared at the doorway. They eyed her and talked to the female but Erie couldn't understand them clearly. One of the males came at her and she pulled the same maneuvers on him as she did with the female.

She couldn't believe how easy it was to avoid these guys. Dae'er was much more difficult to beat and Erie guessed these guys had little to no training, especially not as much as she had. She easily darted and dodged the two males together but when the female joined in, it became much more challenging. They flanked her and the male that was coming at her straight on, she threw a combo at. A hard heavy right jab into the side of his mandible then a left hook into his ribs. While he was stunned and wailing in pain, she jumped up and planted both of her feet into his chest. He went stumbling backwards and while she was scrambling to get back to her feet, the other male brought his foot down heavily onto her back.

He pinned her to the ground and she writhed and struggled to get free. As soon as she felt her body move he dropped his knee into her spine, completely rendering her helpless. While she was stunned, the female scanned her arm frantically. Erie knew from their conversation that they were summoning Dae'er somehow with her I.D. tag.

The guy with his knee in her back picked her up by her hair and shoved her onto a nearby sofa. She looked at the male she had lashed out on and he was woozily sitting up and talking to the female. She folded her arms on the arm of the couch then buried her face into them. She didn't care about what she had done or that Dae'er was going to be upset with her, she only cared that no one else seemed bothered by the fact that someone was about to be euthanized. Why should her and the other companion girls be killed off because the person that essentially kidnapped them died? Why not just return them to their home planet?

She heard a commotion at the metal detectors and she looked up to see Dae'er angrily conversing with the baby sitter and the uninjured male. She watched as they motioned at the guy on the floor then at her and Dae'er kept his eyes on her the whole the time. Great. She was probably going to be punished for using her new skills on the babysitter and her bodyguards. She had done so well so far, her last punishment was back when she first got here. Dae'er cared for her, that she could tell, but she knew he would feel like he had to punish her or he could get in more trouble than she was in right now.

"No'elia, come." He said and she obeyed without question.

The babysitter scanned her arm and Erie could tell the female wanted to growl or spit or anything to show that she disliked her but she wouldn't dare do it with Dae'er standing right there. Erie hung her head dejectedly and instead of hanging onto his waist like she normally

did when they walked, she stayed at the length she did when he would escort her with his hand on her neck. She half expected him to walk her around like that right now anyway.

He didn't say anything or do anything when he brought her back to his apartment. She stood at the entrance of his home while he went into his room. What was he doing? Was she not in trouble? She waited to see what he would do. To see if he was just thinking about how to punish her. He came back out and held her new daggers and sheaths out to her. She took them hesitantly while looking at him suspiciously.

"Am I in trouble?" She questioned.

"Come." He instructed and she followed him to the training room.

He knelt down beside her and motioned for her weapons. She handed them to him and he hastily attached them to her thighs. He pulled them out and placed them back in.

"Try it." He mumbled and she quickly wrapped her hands around the blades and pulled them out then slid them back in.

She watched as he stood and backed away from her then he opened his wrist computer and a holographic image of an Yautja male appeared. She looked at him confused. Surely he didn't want her to fight this hologram. It could kill her. Was this her punishment? A harsh beating from someone else so he didn't have to feel bad.

"What are.." She started but he interrupted her.

"No'elia, you will kill this male." He instructed.

"No! I can't." She said backing away from the hologram.

"You would choose his life over yours?" He asked as he stepped further back from her and the hologram.

"I don't want to do this." She felt the sting of tears gathering in her eyes.

"I have trained you enough that a male of this power should easily perish at your blades. You will show me what you did in the companion station to that Young Blood. Display to me how you took him down." Dae'er stepped back and tilted his head at her.

She shook her head frantically and the hologram moved in front of her. She couldn't do this. She couldn't kill something even if it was fake. The Yautja trilled and took off running at her. Why was Dae'er doing this to her? She wasn't ready. She couldn't fight an Yautja.

The male threw a punch that was coming down at her from above and without thinking, she threw her forearms up in a criss cross manner and blocked the blow. He threw a right hook at her head and she raised her left arm, allowing his punch to connect with her armguard. She reacted fast and threw her own right hand swing, connecting right into his mandible. The hologram chuffed then roared and came at her in a flurry of green heavy fists.

She utilized everything Dae'er taught her. When he threw a right hook, she blocked with her left arm and would use her free hand to strike. If he threw a left hand undercut, she'd knock his arm away and give a swift heavy kick to his stomach. She couldn't believe she was doing it, blocking his attacks like they were nothing. She eventually was able to predict his moves and was able to get in more hits of her own. His mouth oozed neon green blood and

one of his eyes was completely shot. She couldn't see through skin but she was sure he had tons of bruises. She smiled, she was doing it! She was actually fighting and winning.

The male extended his wrist blades and Erie felt panic rise up in her. How was she supposed to counter this? She looked around for Dae'er but he was stealthed somewhere. She pulled her new daggers from their sheaths and readied herself. Dae'er's words repeated in her head over and over again. "Be quick, be swift, be precise." Her size was her greatest ability and she had to utilize it like Dae'er had taught her. She had to be offensive to win.

She dashed at the male and he swung his wrist blades, nearly getting her arm. She plunged her right dagger into the lower left side of his back and he howled in pain. He was worn out and too slow. She could do this. She could totally do this! She tried to pull her dagger out but it was wedged into his thick skin, she had no choice but to leave it. He pivoted and tried to drive his wrist blades into her belly but she dropped to her knees causing the blades to skim over the top of her head. This time she aimed for a more sensitive area where the skin wasn't as thick. She used her second dagger and buried it deep into his groin.

This time she was able to retrieve her dagger from the thin skin area and a gush of lime green poured down his leg and dripped from her blade. While she was down here, she brought her knee back and slammed her bare foot into his shin. He dropped to one knee and Erie stood up with her single dagger, tight in her fist, and loomed over him.

"I did it!" She shouted angrily. "I don't have to kill him to know that I beat him." She huffed out.

Dae'er didn't reply and she spun around to look for him. While she was distracted, she felt the searing pain of the male Yautja's wrist blades connect with her thigh. Luckily, he was weak and couldn't summon the strength to slice all the way through her limb. Her blood poured out from the wound and she looked at the hologram. He was beaten but still tried to kill her? Even after she had granted him mercy, he used the last of his strength to try and injure her. She gripped her dagger in her fist, tightening her hold on it.

Dae'er was right. He would kill her if she didn't kill him first. If he had even just a little more strength she would be missing a leg right now. He was testing her heart. Seeing if she would rather die than kill another. She squeezed the handle of her dagger as she stared down at the Yautja male struggling to cut her with his wrist blades. The metal scraped on the floor of the training room and she stepped back out of his reach. She moved around to the other side of him as tears poured from her eyes.

She had never killed anything before, in fact, her entire life was devoted to saving people. Once again she was faced with having to take a life to save her own, like back at the hospital with the man in the coma. She understood what Dae'er was teaching her. If this male wasn't a hologram then he would certainly do anything to try and kill her. It was her or him and she definitely didn't want to die anytime soon. Doing what she should have done at the hospital, she dropped down quickly, buried her knee into his chest then she drove her dagger up through his chin and twisted it. His mouth gurgled and bubbled up more blood and she wiped away the spontaneous tears from her eyes.

After a moment, the body buzzed away and the sound of her daggers hitting the floor echoed through the training room. Dae'er appeared over top of her and stared at her.

"I choose me." She sobbed. 'I choose my life.' He gathered her daggers and handed them to her. "Was this my punishment?" She questioned again.

"No, No'elia. I am not punishing you. I am proud of your actions today. You defended yourself in the station and in here. I was disappointed that you only injured the Young Blood so I was curious if it was because of your compassion or because you were retrained to prevent further harm." He made his way out of the training room and Erie slid her daggers into their sheaths before catching up with him.

"You wanted me to kill him?" She asked.

"I want you to act as if each encounter like the one at the station is a life or death situation. Remember, No'elia, it's either your life or theirs." He said as he led her into his apartment.

She watched as he removed his armor then he took hers off and laid it next to his, followed by her daggers. She curled up into the furs and pulled one of the pelts close to her body to cuddle it. Dae'er stroked her long hair with his claws and she laid there enjoying the sensation. The slight comfort was relaxing especially after everything that happened.

"Did the ancient die?" She asked in Yautja.

"Yes." Dae'er replied.

"Will Seleana be killed?" She questioned.

"The ancient requested with his final breath that his daughter take her as a companion. Talia surprisingly agreed." Dae'er spoke slowly so she could understand but she barely caught some of the key words.

"Seleana is alive?" She confirmed.

"Yes. Your friend will live on." He replied.

Erie let out a sigh of relief. The Talia woman went up 100 points in her book but she was still in the negative. She turned over and buried her face into Dae'er's scorching hot warmth. He wrapped his huge muscular arms around her and embraced her. She couldn't believe she had actually killed something today, even if it was just a hologram. It was, however, quite a relief to know that she wasn't as weak as she thought. She had actually grown quite strong thanks to Dae'er's 24/7 training. She pressed her lips to his firm pecs then trailed a line of kisses down his chest. He might be hard on her but she was grateful for his stern attitude towards her. He was doing all of this to make sure she could protect herself, to defend herself in case something were to happen to him, like it ever would since he was so strong, but if it did, he wanted to make sure she was well equipped.

Just the thought of him caring for her so enormously had her girly parts stirring. He sensed it too as he began a low steady purr in his chest that vibrated against her face. She wanted nothing more than to feel Dae'er's powerful body over top of hers. His hands rubbed over her skin and she closed her eyes to enjoy his attention to her. She felt so confident and so capable now, her only thought now was how to increase it. She couldn't wait until their next training session but for now, she allowed Dae'er to indulge himself in everything she had to offer and then some.

Chapter 11

Thanks again for choosing Devotion! The second chapter of my two chapter posting of the day.

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Six months had passed and Dae'er felt that No'elia was ready for her first actual kv'var. She was able to defeat the holograms in his kehrite with ease and the more she trained, the faster she took them down. After her first hologram kill on the Yautja, something had come nanku inside of her. She was more eager to practice and no longer complained when they spent countless hours in the kehrite. She had even requested her meals to be eaten in the kehrite. Normally, she would take them in his dwellings but not anymore.

Even now she was still training. He had stopped to take a message and it was getting close to Final Meal. He wasn't complaining, in fact, she had become strong enough to provide quite a workout for him. He had never trained so often, not even with his Yautja protégés. He had grown quite fond of her determination and willingness to become stronger. He found it hard to keep his claws off her after she slayed an enemy with her bare hands. She had become twice as alluring.

The last of the kainde amedha crackled and disappeared and No'elia sheathed her daggers. Her crimson flowers were practically glowing from how healthy she was. Her body had become quite toned and he personally enjoyed her new endurance.

Just watching her walk over to him had his malehood throbbing. The sweat glistening on her bare abdomen and the adrenaline rushing through her thwei had his own pumping. He let out a purr of satisfaction and she chuckled at him.

"Again? That would be the fourth time today!" She exclaimed smiling at him.

Her Yautja had improved greatly. She had perfected every click and growl and he no longer needed a translator to communicate with her. It was just one more thing that impressed him and begged at him to take her. She lifted a container and took a long drink of ju'dha from it.

"I must attend Final Meal." He said.

She finished her drink and wiped her mouth with the back of her hand. "Already? It feels like you just got back from Second Meal."

"Your training has become extensive. You should rest before your first kv'var." He said as he walked over to her and looked down at her with desire in his fiery red deknas.

"Rest? I can rest when I am dead." She said as she locked her tiny fingers around his netting and yanked him close to her.

Before her training, she never would've been able to budge him but now, she had enough thar'n-dha to cause him to move his feet when she shoved on him. He had new awu'asa made for her that was much more durable. The metal pieces were the exact same material as his own awu'asa and while he favored the less covering bottoms for her, she had requested, what she calls, a skirt. There were slits up both sides and the material was a strong durable fabric. It was used to make the netting underneath his own awu'asa and completely immune to the acid of the kainde amedha.

Her breast covering was made of the same fabric and, per her request again, resembled the harness like top she first had. Her arm gauntlets were made like his, minus the technology, even though he had considered it in case she got lost or needed him. He did however, equip her with her own set of dah'kte, customized for her size, and a bio mask. She didn't use the dah'kte as often as he would like but he did notice when things became difficult she would resort to them. As long as she utilized them, he was satisfied.

The bio mask was only a partial covering that went over her deknas to grant her the vision benefits. He didn't see any reason for a full one since she didn't need a translator or to control devices. It attached much like his own, with a special magnetic strip, designed only for the bio mask, embedded just below her skin. The gray metal and black deknas made her look menacing but it was necessary for her upcoming chiva.

After her successful kv'var, she would become a Blooded according to his society. Since he is high ranking her status would actually skyrocket if she had managed to defeat strong foes in front of him. He planned on approaching his father for permission to mark her after she killed her first prey. It would be an yin'tekai for her and for him.

"Would you like to go to the station?" He questioned. She hadn't been in so long that he thought she could use some ooman interactions and a break from her training.

"Sure but then more training. I want to be ready for this kv'var you have planned." She removed her bio mask and slid it into a holding on her bottom coverings then chipperly bounded out of the kehrite and he followed her.

She wrapped her tiny hand around his then nuzzled her cheek against the bare part of his arm. He allowed her to wear her weapons and her awu'asa around now. He had received a lot of complaints and even had to face his sire about it but his father was lenient and allowed it. His sire seemed to be quite compliant when it came to No'elia. He was suspicious about it but if he was agreeing to situations that involved her well being, he didn't want to risk corrupting his sire's decisions.

The guardian at the companion station was always uneasy when he brought No'elia. After both of them had made such a scene in the small area, he was surprised they allowed them back at all. He purred and caressed No'elia's cheek before watching her enter the room and join Talia's companion.

He didn't care much for No'elia's friend. He imagined Talia was corrupting her in some way, especially if she knew that her and No'elia were close. He made sure to inquire No'elia after every visit to the station. He wanted to make sure Talia wouldn't use her companion to hurt No'elia in any way. After observing them for a while he dispersed and made his way to Final Meal.

The gathering was the same as always. Elders and Ancients conversing about politics and wars. Blooded and Young Bloods telling tales of their kv'vars and females they wished they could have. Just like at every other meal, Dae'er had the dessert wrapped up and sent to his dwellings. A treat for No'elia that she looked forwards to just as much as training now. He had to make one stop outside of his clan's citadel before retrieving No'elia. He had to make it quick since she always seemed to be unhappy when he picked her up after everyone else.

He boarded one of his small ships and headed for a specialty shop. He could've had his servant do this but he wanted to see the item in person. He arrived and the shopkeep greeted him honorably. Dae'er ignored his gesture and ordered him to fetch the item. The scrawny male came back out with a small leather bound case and opened it for Dae'er.

"Is it complete?" He asked the shopkeep.

"Sei-i. The pearls were difficult to string but I managed to do it without damaging them." The shopkeep slid the box closer to Dae'er.

They were rare gems Dae'er had collected from several kv'vars. Special black pearls that looked like they had star clusters inside of them. Each one was unique and different. Some had white bursts while others were multi colored. The creature he would harvest them from took ten years to create just one. The creature itself was rare and required an entire week to find it. He figured they would be the perfect gift after No'elia completed her first kv'var.

The pearls were stunning but the true prize was the pendant. He had a section of his very first polearm removed and melted down into the symbol of his royal bloodline. An emblem that was given to every female that was chosen as a mate to royalty, a physical way to state that she was claimed.

The necklace as a whole was small and he tried to imagine it around No'elia's slender neck. The pendant should lay just below her collarbone but it wouldn't be too tight and interfere when she fought. The only thing he disliked was the box the shopkeep had chosen. He felt like it should be something more elegant.

"It will do." He said as he opened his wrist gauntlet and transferred funds over to the shopkeep. "My servant will return to pick it up."

The scrawny male bowed and Dae'er promptly left. He knew No'elia would enjoy his gift. She seemed to enjoy everything he gave her. Once he had his servant bring her flowers while he was away and she kept them even after they had died. He had to throw them out while she was asleep. It was interesting how sentimental she was and he favored her reactions when he brought her things. Her mood would increase greatly and he wanted nothing more than to keep her satisfied.

He arrived at the station and still saw several other companions in the room. She was pleased with his promptness as she bounded over and held out her arm to be scanned.

"You're early!" She said as she came over and wrapped her smooth arms around his waist.

He stroked her dark mane and escorted her down the hall. "Was your friend satisfactory?" He questioned.

"Seleana? Yeah, she's okay. She says Talia is hard on her and that she misses her master." No'elia replied.

“That is one of the reasons why she should’ve joined the Ancient in his thei-de. A new master could never compare to a previous one and her sorrow will never subside.” He explained.

“No one could ever replace you.” She said smiling up at him.

It made him feel proud that she was so devoted to him. Physically and mentally. He felt confident that she trusted him completely now. Unlike the other companions who only behaved because if they didn’t they would be punished, she was obedient out of her own choice. She was happy and enjoyed being around him. Based on her reactions towards him, it was obvious she even looked forward to being with him.

“When are we leaving for my kv’var?” She questioned as they arrived at his wing of the citadel.

“Two days.” He said as he entered his dwellings.

She immediately spotted the dessert he had saved for her and promptly sat down to eat it. “I can’t wait.” She said as she took a bite out of the iced pastry.

Over the past two days, Dae’er had been working on getting No’elia placed with the other Young Bloods that were up for their chivas. He had spoken to other Clan Leaders and Elders that had proteges in the group. All of them were against No’elia joining their students but as Prince and one with the Elder rank, he simply had to exert his rankings. No’elia would join the other Young Bloods in their kv’var. He was displeased with the location that had been selected at random as it was one of the oldest chiva locations they had.

They had several chiva locations on Earth but this particular one was on a different planet of oomans. The population on the planet was extremely low. Mostly from being abducted or used to sacrifice for their chivas. The planet had been set on an endangered list until they had repopulated and a recent count put them well above the ready mark to be sacrificed for chivas.

Dae’er had been to the location before to replace the dying queen with a new one and even he had trouble maneuvering through the ancient maze. The stone used to create it, was crumbling then, he could only imagine it now after a hundred years of going unused. The outside structure, however, was still solid which was all that mattered. Keeping the kainde amedha restrained was top priority. Losing the Young Bloods was well below concern.

No’elia would be at a disadvantage since she was so fragile and her skin wasn’t as thick as an Yautja’s which was designed to last through a few seconds of the kainde amedha’s acidic blood. Her’s would instantly melt to the bone with any contact. He was concerned for her well being but he was also confident that she was ready. Normal Young Bloods only had four months of training with an Elite or Elder and she’s had six.

He wouldn’t be able to join her or be anywhere near the chiva grounds as the Young Bloods were supposed to figure it out for themselves. Any interference from him or another would be considered an immediate failure. He could however, watch her from his ship and track her with her I.D. tag.

He had seen many of his trainees go through their chivas successfully without any trouble but for some reason he was nervous for No’elia. The ship was closing in on the planet with

their chiva grounds and he watched as No'elia pulled her long dark mane up and restrained it with a tie. Her heart was pulsating fast and she looked extremely apprehensive.

He wanted to comfort her, ask her if she wanted to wait, tell her that she didn't have to go through with it but that wasn't what he did to his other trainees. He decided to treat her just like the others that way her mind would not be compromised with doubt.

"Your dah'kte are tuned?" He questioned and she extended them and retracted them to show him. "Your daggers are sharpened and flawless?" She pulled them out and twirled them in her hands before replacing them. "Your bio mask is up to date?" The black eye slits lit up red and she smiled up at him. "As I stated before, I can not join you but I can watch from the ship. The other Young Bloods may or may not help you if you get into trouble but remember they are here for themselves as you are. A kill must be from your own hands, even if it is mortally wounded and you finish it, it only counts if you are the one that inflicts the wound." He explained.

"I have to kill it with no help. Got it." She said as she watched the other Young Bloods head for the transporter.

"No'elia, there will beoomans there. They may be surprised by you but they are not like you, not anymore. They are there to provide you with prey, nothing more. If you feel threatened, you take their lives. Remember, it's you or them." She nodded at him in agreement then he reached up and caressed her face with his hand.

"The first oomans have been sacrificed." A Clan Leader said as he nodded towards another.

She quickly wrapped her arms around him and squeezed him tightly and he chi'ytei her. He'd be lying if he said he wasn't afraid of losing her. He had poured all of his knowledge of fighting and hunting into her and he only hoped it was enough. She pressed her soft lips to his skin then she turned and sprinted for the transporter. She waved at him happily then she disappeared.

He quickly went over and pulled up the layout of the pyramid maze and added her tracer to it. He saw the flashing red dot that represented No'elia appear as well as the three other Young Bloods. Two of them headed off together, while one went alone, leaving No'elia by herself. He wasn't sure how that situation sat with him, part of him didn't want her to be alone but if she were going to make a kill, it had to be alone. He pulled up a feed from all of the bio masks and the screen would switch from Young Blood to Young Blood showing them real time of what they were seeing. No'elia was making her way through the top level, using the wall as a guideline like he had taught her.

"You believe your companion will last more than an hour?" Ja'lar, a Clan Leader not part of his clan spoke up.

"My reputation will precede. All of my students have passed their chivas. Can't say the same for you, Ja'lar." Dae'er said as he kept his deknas on the screen and paying close attention to No'elia.

"She has no way of smelling the kainde amedha. They will be on top of her long before she realizes it. You can only hope that she is quick." The second Clan Leader piped up.

Dae'er had of course came to this conclusion long ago and that was why he had trained No'elia to be fast and precise with her movements and her weapons. She was small, even for an ooman, it was key that she use that ability to it's full extent.

"I have confidence and she may even be the first to make a kill." Dae'er said as he pointed towards the screen.

No'elia was stealthily hiding as a group of oomans passed by her. A kainde amedha was stalking them closely. No'elia's bio mask was alerting her of it but she couldn't risk fighting it while the oomans were nearby. They could interfere and ruin her first kill. She jumped up to a ledge keeping her deknas on the oomans and the kainde amedha. The screen changed to another Young Blood who was in the same vicinity as No'elia. He however, had not spotted the kainde amedha and was instead eyeing up the oomans.

"Ja'lar." Dae'er said as the Clan Leader approached the screen in time to see his student massacre the oomans.

"That pauking hothead!" Ja'lar hissed out.

"The first thwei spilled was that of an ooman. Your student has already corrupted this chiva and it has barely begun." The other Clan Leader sneered.

Ja'lar only had the one student while the other Clan Leader had the two that had stayed grouped together. The screen changed to one of them and they were heading deep within the pyramid. Dae'er tilted his head to the side trying to figure out where they were going. They were no where near where the sacrificial chamber was or the oomans. They were obviously up to something but the screen changed again to No'elia, who seemed to be the only one set on completing her chiva.

She was high above the ground, patting her way through the massive hall in the center of the pyramid. She was watching the other Young Blood that had just finished killing the oomans then she set her gaze on the kainde amedha who was also watching him. She moved closer to the Young Blood and he spotted her immediately. The screen switched to his view and all he saw of No'elia was the red deknas of her bio mask. When her head turned he followed and saw the kainde amedha leap out from behind a massive fallen stone.

It had knocked him to the ground and was on top of him, trying furiously to sink it's teeth into the oblivious Young Blood. Ja'lar was on edge as he watched the situation. Dae'er set the screen to halt on the Young Blood's vision and all three of them watched as the Young Blood struggled to regain control of the situation.

The kainde amedha's massive tail was breaking the stone beside the Young Blood's head as it tried to impale him. Dae'er's immediate thought was that of No'elia. Was she just watching and waiting? Was she trying to decide on what to do? Knowing her she was probably trying to figure out how to save the fool but she knew what it meant if she did. The Young Blood had yet to strike the kainde amedha so it was still fair game even if it was preoccupied with trying to kill him. If she intervened, then he would miss his chance to complete his chiva.

She may be compassionate and dying to save the male but she was also considerate. He was sure she would only attack if she felt the other Young Blood was in dire need of her assistance. He switched the screen momentarily to No'elia's bio mask and she was still

perched on the ledge, watching as he had thought. Ja'lar huffed impatiently and Dae'er switched it back to his Young Blood's vision.

"Get up! Get up you fool!" Ja'lar hissed.

The kainde amedha landed a blow with his tail, piercing the male through his shoulder. Ja'lar unleashed his anger onto a nearby metal wall but Dae'er kept watching the show. The Young Blood was still nanku when the kainde amedha launched a massive glob of acid at him hitting him directly on the bio mask. The feed buzzed and became jumbled with only moments of what was going on being visible.

Dae'er watched closely as a familiar face appeared in the Young Blood's feed. It was No'elia, she came from above and drove her dah'kte through the kainde amedha's skull. With only a glance at what was happening, he saw the Young Blood sliding away from under the kainde amedha and he saw No'elia's small figure lashing through the creature over and over again. He switched the feed to hers in time to see her jumping off the kainde amedha's back into a crouch as the lifeless corpse fell.

Dae'er trilled in satisfaction. She had did it. She had completed her chiva successfully and was the first of the four to do it. She had also saved the Young Blood, which to him was worth more than just the kill. Usually, the other trainers would congratulate him but they weren't. Ja'lar was radiating with anger while the other Clan Leader was in a stupor.

"An ooman. A female ooman companion, just saved my protege and made the first kill." Ja'lar growled out. "He will still be forced a dishonorable thei-de." He said as he stormed out of the control room.

Dae'er understood why the Clan Leader was upset. No'elia was all of those things but she was now a Blooded sain'ja. She deserved more respect than what they were giving her. He chuffed. The Young Blood was wounded and without his bio mask but it was still possible for him to complete his chiva. Ja'lar's petition to have him suicide would certainly be thrown out after they witnessed the footage.

Either way, he was proud of No'elia. He was more at ease now that she had made a kill. The chiva grounds still needed to be cleansed of all kainde amedha and there were still oomans running around. He was more than certain that No'elia could complete the tasks. When they returned to his planet, he would have her marked appropriately and a revelry will be held in her yin'tekai as the first to make a kill. She would finally get the same respect from the rest of his kind that he gave her. She was Blooded now, a worthy and honorable member of his society and she belonged to him.

Yautja Vocab:

Ooman: Human

Kv'var: Hunt

Kainde Amedha: Hard meats, Xenomorphs, or what we know as the creatures from Alien.

Pyode Amedha: Soft Meats, humans.

Dah-kte: Wrist Blades

Sain'ja: Warrior

Awu'asa: Armor

Dekna(s): Eye/Eyes

No'eli: Cat/Feline

Thwei: Blood

Kehrite: Training room, gym

Thar'n-dha: Strength

Pauk: Fuck

yin-tekai: Honor

nanku: Alive

thei-de: Death

Chapter 12

Disclaimer: I do not own Predator, Alien or any character pertaining to the AvP franchise.

No'elia stood in front of the Yautja that she had saved and looked at the kainde amedha she had just destroyed. It's pooled acidic blood steamed and made hissing sounds as it destroyed the dirt on the stones. She had done what Dae'er told her to do. The male hadn't struck it first which made it fair game and she had saved this guy in the process. She watched as he pulled off his busted bio mask and hooked it to his belt, like Dae'er did.

She walked over and extended her hand to help him up but he quickly smacked it away. "I don't need your help." He growled out.

"It certainly didn't look that way." She snapped. What an arrogant asshole. Just like the rest of the Yautja males. "If it weren't for me, you'd be kainde amedha chow right now." She retracted her wrist blades and looked around the room for any more threat.

The male stood up using the wall as leverage. "You're an ooman, a female companion, you have no right to be here." He spat.

"Is that right?" She said turning to face him. "Guess me standing here is proof of that, huh?" She scaled back up the wall to the ledge and looked down at him. "If I were you, I'd follow this female ooman companion. The rest of the kainde amedha would love to finish that one's job."

"I'll take my chances." He said as he held his hand against the oozing hole in his shoulder.

"Suit yourself." She jumped up to another ledge and headed for another floor of the pyramid.

She pulled herself up into a doorway and quickly made sure there was nothing waiting to attack her. She took a few steps when the sound of something behind her had her retrieving her daggers and preparing to strike. She quickly sheathed them again when she saw the Yautja male struggling to pull himself up into the hallway.

She went over and pulled him into the hall. He stood and brushed off his palms. "Say nothing." He demanded as he walked past her.

"I didn't say anything." She chuckled. He wanted to live just as much as the next guy, she wasn't about to judge anyone for that, even if he did deserve a good tease.

He used her like a guide dog as she escorted them through the hallways. Dae'er had told her that even after she finished with her first kill, she still had to get rid of the rest of the kainde amedha. She didn't have a wrist computer thingy like the big guy behind her did, so she had no way to tell how many were left. He'd at least be her way of tracking them.

“Three so far but there are five more oomans roaming around which means five more kainde amedha.” He said.

“Maybe they won’t be sacrificed.” She added.

He chuffed. “You’re an ooman and you still don’t realize how pathetic your kind is. The oomans roaming aren’t trained or strong. They are civilians. They might be able to take down one but the rest will certainly kill them.”

“Can’t we just, you know, blow it all up?” She asked using her hands to make an explosion gesture.

“Of course you don’t see a problem in that. You’ve completed your trial. There are still three other Young Bloods that want a chance.” He snarled.

“You think you can still fight anything with a wound like that?” She asked stopping to point at his shoulder.

He looked down at her with animosity in his eyes. “If I do not complete my chiva, then I will have to face my Clan Leader and I’d rather take my chances with the kainde amedha.” He passed her by and she followed him this time.

“I can help you.” She stated.

“No, you can not.” He huffed.

“Sure I can’t, you know, hold it down while you stab it but I can help in other ways.” She said.

“What ways could possibly exist that wouldn’t compromise my chiva?” He said as he turned down another hall.

“I can be bait, just like you were.” She offered.

He stopped and looked at her as he thought about her idea. “You trust me to kill the kainde amedha before it got to you?” He asked.

She mulled it over for a moment. Dae’er would certainly not be pleased with this plan but she wanted to help the guy. Without it he would certainly die and she didn’t go through all that work for him to just kill himself when they got home. She sighed heavily.

“Sure. Just keep in mind if you don’t succeed and I die, that it won’t be your blade that ends your life.” She threatened.

“Oh? You will somehow avenge yourself from the grave?” He asked trilling at her.

“No but your Prince surely will.” She added and he stiffened at her remark.

“That is more terrifying than you helping me.” He said and she laughed. It was funny even if he was dead serious.

They had tracked one of the kainde amedha and after the male confirmed on his wrist computer that it was up ahead, Erie thought about how to do this. Her best idea was to get it’s attention and then somehow loop it to him so he can strike it while it was distracted with her. She had the male pull up the 3D hologram of the pyramid and there was a room up ahead

which put a dent in her loop around plan. She could, however, pull it out to where they are now and have it chase her. She'd have to cut corners which meant that she would have to get within reach of the kainde amedha. Maybe if she could get a good lead on it, she wouldn't have to get so close.

"Alright. You wait right here and I'll go and pull it down to you. There's a lot of corners I need to round so as soon as I come around this one, you have to strike or I'm dead." The male nodded at her in affirmation and she clasped her hands together. "Well, here goes."

She stalked down the dark halls, making sure to scan the other halls in case of a surprise attack. The corridor was long with multiple exits and the room was about fifty yards from where the male was waiting. When she got close enough to hear the low growling of the kainde amedha she let out a yelp and instantly the kainde amedha's claws scratched against the stone as it bounded for her. She saw it come around the corner, screeching loudly and dead set on her. She immediately kicked it into high gear and charged back down the hall.

She was fast, way fast, but this thing sounded like it was closing in much quicker than she had predicted. She zoomed past other hallways and her ears were popping from the wind she was creating. That asshole better be ready when she got down here. Her calves were screaming at her and she was certain that they were running on pure adrenaline now.

As she approached the corridor where the male was supposed to be waiting, her bio mask adjusted and zoomed in on something she really didn't need to see right now. A twitching tail, thrashing back and forth and the feet of a dead Yautja barely sticking out from behind the wall. Fuck. Seriously? She was gone, literally five minutes, and he couldn't handle himself.

She had taken on two and sometimes, if she was feeling confident, three kainde amedha in Dae'er's gym but they were out in the open. She wasn't sure how she would handle two in such a closed off space. She had to remain calm and focused. She couldn't let fear cloud her thoughts. She had no choice but to fight these things and there was definitely no one that was going to help her now. No stealthed Dae'er waiting for her in the shadows, no stupid Young Blood to watch her back and no emergency shut off button. This was it. A real life or death situation. One wrong move and it'll be her corpse they were feeding from.

She extended her wrist blades and as soon as she got right on top of the kainde amedha feeding from her acquaintance, she leaped off the wall to her left. She drove the blades straight through it's back, severing it's spine. It roared and violently turned a 180, slinging her off it's back. She collided with the wall and her head began to spin from the impact. She had to get up. She had to get up now.

She crawled away in the opposite direction and the thundering of the first kainde amedha's massive talons closed in on her. When the sound stopped, she knew it was leaping through the air to land on her. She quickly pulled out her daggers and rolled onto her back. A position Dae'er had thoroughly instructed her not to be in but she had no choice at this point. As it reared back it's massive head to try and take a bite out of her, she raised her arm and blocked it's massive jaws.

She could feel it's teeth grinding and trying to chew through her armguard but it was holding up amazingly. She would certainly have bruises but it was better than losing an arm or her head. It's small arms were struggling to reach her as well and when it realized her arm wasn't budging it tried to use it's talons to pry her arm from it's mouth. She gritted her teeth

as the talons raked down her bare skin, shredding it to ribbons. With all of her strength she shoved her arm hard into it's jaws and with her dagger in her free hand, she immediately began to hack away it's underside. Not caring where her blade hit as long as it was connecting somewhere.

It's acidic intestines dropped like a sandbag and she spread her legs wide to avoid getting melted. When she felt it's jaws loosening around her arm, she shoved it backwards then scuttled away to avoid it's body landing on her. Her own blood gushed from her arm. She made a mental note to ask Dae'er for full coverage armor when she was finished with this place.

She stood up and immediately saw the immobilized kainde amedha gurgle and spitting out acid everywhere in a last stand. It's bottom half was completely still. Thank God she hit the spine or else she wouldn't be alive right now. The two of them certainly would've overwhelmed her. She wondered if Dae'er had watched the whole scenario and she wondered what he thought. She personally thought she handled it quite well, given the situation.

She walked over to the struggling kainde amedha and drove her dagger through it's skull. It promptly stilled then she turned her attention to the dead Yautja. His midsection was completely open and neon green blood pooled under his body. Well, hopefully he died quickly and without suffering. She somehow doubted it though. She squatted down and opened his wrist computer. She could understand Yautja and speak it quite well but she couldn't read it. Everything looked completely unfamiliar. She wanted to pull up the 3D map to get a count on how many were left and if the oomans were still alive but this thing was like looking at the engine of a car. Completely alien.

She just had to go on what she knew from before. Three were left so now one was left but there were five humans still alive which could mean there were possibly six left. Great. Maybe she could somehow find the humans and keep them alive until she killed the last one but now that she had killed two of the three that meant that there was one less kainde amedha for the other two Yautja to complete their chiva. Fuck. She was so lost. She was well equipped to kill things but was coming up short with how to get the hell out of this place.

She just had to explore until she happened upon something. Anything at this point would be stupendous. If she found the oomans, all she had to do was sit around and wait for the kainde amedha to show up and then kill it. If she found the other two Yautja, she could have access to a map and a count of what was left to get rid of. If she found the kainde amedha, she could just kill the damn thing and get the hell out of dodge. So she would take whatever she could find and hopefully the other humans hadn't been sacrificed yet.

She had been wandering the halls and corridors for what felt like hours and was coming up short. No Yautja, no humans and no kainde amedha. Hell, not even a sign that anything had been where she was. Surely Dae'er would come get her if she were the last one standing. He wouldn't just let her meander around this empty pyramid just because so that meant that something somewhere was still alive and kickin'.

The sound of someone crying out had her pivoting around towards a corridor. That was definitely a human cry. She sprinted towards the sound and the closer she got the more she heard. People were shouting and yelling and apparently someone was injured. Erie stopped right before a doorway and peered in from the darkness.

There were three humans, two men and a woman. One of the men had a banged up leg and the woman was arguing with the second man on whether or not to leave him. If they didn't quiet down, they'd have more to worry about than a busted leg. Her biggest concern was that there used to be five humans, so where were the other two?

A scraping sound echoed through the hall behind her, drawing her attention and the humans. She scanned the shadows searching for the sound but she couldn't see anything. She didn't want to risk encountering more kainde amedha especially with the humans here. They'd certainly cause more trouble than she needed.

She moved over to an empty hall and watched the opening of the room. The man and woman were looking out, trying to locate the source of the sound. Her bio mask picked up movement off to the right of the doorway and identified one of the other Yautja. He was injured and the scraping sound was his wrist blades dragging along the stone wall. His hand was holding onto his midsection and she guessed that was where he was hurt.

The humans couldn't see but they were looking in the right direction. They were talking indistinctly on what to do. They were still debating on whether or not to abandon the wounded or to risk dragging him along. Dae'er had told her in her training if they could walk then bring them otherwise they were dead weight.

From her position across from the doorway she could see the female hugging the guy with the busted leg. He was obviously her brother or her boyfriend or something. The wounded Yautja was getting closer. Erie was unsure of what to do. Showing herself would definitely startle the humans and she wasn't sure how they would react to her but she wanted to get to the wounded Yautja before he died so she could use his map.

She mumbled under breath then dashed out from the shadows and headed for the Yautja. The humans definitely saw her and expressed their reactions verbally. She ignored them and headed right for the male who was now lying on the floor. She opened his wrist computer and he stared at her a moment before realizing who she was.

"Ooman." His voice was raspy and she knew she didn't have much time.

"Pull up the map." She said sternly. "Hurry!" She moved his arm towards his face and she watched as he punched buttons slowly, taking note on which ones they were.

The man and woman had gathered and were watching her from afar. The yellow hologram appeared and zoomed out from their red blinking dots and the human's green ones. Two yellow dots indicated kainde amedha and one red dot meant the other Yautja was still alive. The image fuzzed away and she looked at the Yautja.

"Finish. The. Hunt." He slurred out before going unconscious.

He was barely alive but he was still violating Dae'ar's rule, no walking, no saving. She'd have to leave him. She saw a marking on his bio mask that indicated he had killed one of the kainde amedha. He must've taken a nasty hit from the monster during the fight. According to Yautja society, he was an honorable male.

She closed up his wrist computer then stood and looked at the humans that were watching her. The man was older, looked about in his forties while the woman looked about her age,

give or take a couple years. She didn't want to deal with them and she definitely didn't want to bring them with her.

"Stay here." She said and they looked at her like she had just peeled off her skin.

"You, you're human?" The man asked.

Even though they couldn't see her do it, she rolled her eyes. Maybe that Young Blood was right, humans were pathetic. She turned to leave and they of course called out to her.

"You can't leave us! Please! There are monsters in here!" The woman cried out.

"Just stay here!" She shouted firmly as she took off in a sprint.

With any luck, they would listen to her. Keeping them in one spot would make it much more easier to keep track of not only them but the kainde amedha. After she found the other Yautja she would return to the humans and just wait for the kainde amedha to come to her. That seemed like the best plan.

According to the map, the other Yautja was only a floor below the one she was on now. Which made sense because his friend was up here. She found the large room and scaled down to the next floor. Finding him would be easy enough. Her bio mask would pick him up if he came within range.

She still had to peruse quietly and stealthily. There were still kainde amedha nearby and she wanted to get the jump on them, not the other way around. She wound through the maze until her mask alerted her of the Yautja. He seemed like he was in good shape and she was sure he had spotted her too. She stepped closer to his spot and he stopped.

"Female. What do you want?" He questioned.

"To finish the hunt." She replied.

"My brother, is his wound fatal?" She frowned at his question. So he knew she was up there and with him.

"He won't make it. He will be with Cetanu soon." She said solemnly and he grunted at her statement.

"Is there anything the Prince hasn't told you of our kind? He allows you to train with him, to wield weapons and armor but how could he consider you equal in any way? You are prey. You are no where near equal to us!" He barked.

Not this again. Everyone seemed to have their opinion about her being here. Here they were, in the middle of a death trap and they still found time to give her crap. She had more than proved herself worthy, she had killed more kainde amedha than him, hell, by the look of it, he hadn't even made a kill. Yet he still had the audacity to speak his mind and insult her. She had it with these arrogant assholes and she was done taking their crap.

"Listen here, asshole, I've worked my ass off to be where I am today. I've trained, I've put in the effort to learn your language and your society, hell, I've even put up with all the shit from everyone back home. So you know what? I have every right to slaughter kainde amedha just as much as you do. Now you can either stand here and run your fucking chops or you can shut your mouth and help me finish this hunt. Either way is just dandy with me. I couldn't

give two shits if you complete your chiva.” She said as she turned and headed back for the humans.

Part of her even wanted to go and find the kainde amedha and kill them just so he couldn’t. It’s not like she had to save one for him or anything. Dae’er had said it was every man for himself. She wanted the hell out of here and this was the only way to do it.

She scaled down the wall to the floor where she left the humans. She hoped this time when she returned that there wasn’t disappointment waiting for her. She maneuvered through the halls until she got to the room. She debated on whether or not she should go in there and tell them she was back. Part her thought that elaborating her plan would have benefits like they could just stay and wait but the other part didn’t want to risk them getting upset about being bait and take off. Like the rest of the situations she’d encountered today, she was at a fork in the road.

Her bio mask alerted her of movement and she saw the silhouette of the last Yautja moving outside of the doorway where the humans were. He was cloaked so they couldn’t see him but he was lit up like a Christmas tree in her vision. He watched the humans then he turned and headed for her.

“So you changed your mind?” She whispered. “Was it my insults or the fact you’re going to die without completing your chiva?” She couldn’t resist running her mouth. The guy was a complete dick.

He ignored her of course and she rolled her eyes. Typical. So she guessed the plan was to wait and see what happens. If the humans left, she’d follow them but if they didn’t, they were that much closer to getting out of here.

She couldn’t help but to think about Dae’er and what he was doing. Was he watching her? Was he pleased with how she had handled herself? Maybe he was angry she had allowed herself to get scratched up by the kainde amedha. He’d probably say that it wouldn’t have happened had she not allowed herself to be pinned to the floor.

She looked at her arm that was still bleeding slightly. It had, for the most part, clotted and was scabbing. An effect that her mi flower had on her body. It increased her body’s ability to heal itself by quite a lot. She learned that the hard way on her first encounter with kainde amedha in the gym.

The hologram had managed to pierce through her thigh with it’s tail and she screamed like a baby while Dae’er got rid of the thing. He had tried to look at it and she wouldn’t let him. After a lot of coaxing and reassurance she finally let him take a peek and he said it was already clotted and closing. The flower was more than just vitamins and vanity, it was also like a built in nurse, doctor and surgeon all in one.

Her new acquaintance stiffened and stilled, the signature Yautja reaction to prey. She looked for herself and saw one kainde amedha crawling across the ceiling towards the room. Showtime.

“I will take care of this.” The Yautja said as she headed for the kainde amedha.

Well, whatever, one less thing she had to do. She watched from around the corner as he approached the room. Right as the kainde amedha charged in after the humans, he appeared

and tried to use his wrist blades to slice the thing. It was fast though, and quickly moved to scale the wall. It ran up to the ceiling then dropped down above the Yautja. Great. Here we go again, she was going to have to save someone.

She dashed for the room but right as the kainde amedha went to land on the Yautja, he stepped to the side and punched it into the floor. Whoa. Maybe he wasn't as terrible as the other two. He went to drive his blades into it's stunned body but in its struggle to get up, it's tail whipped around and knocked his arm away.

She stood right outside the doorway, ready to jump in if he needed her. The kainde amedha was back on its feet again and it moved around like a cat, heading right for the Yautja. It sprang up into the air, all four talons in front of it and pointed right at the Yautja. She predicted that it tackle him to the ground but amazingly the Yautja was quick.

He swept his wrist swords low, slicing off its feet in one swift swing. It still landed on the Yautja and its acid blood sprayed around the room. Some of it hit the injured man and his woman and they both let out blood curdling screams. Erie had never seen anything so gruesome before. Their skin literally disintegrated off their face and body. There was hardly any blood as the acid quickly dissolved anything it came across. There was nothing she could do for them now.

The Yautja had shoved the kainde amedha off of himself and was busy driving his wrist blades under its skull. The last human was in shock over at the far side of the room. Well, two humans were gone which meant two less kainde amedha and the last Yautja had completed his chiva. Mission accomplished. Now they could blow this popsicle stand, literally.

Erie walked out into the corridor and kept an eye out for the last kainde amedha. She turned and watched as the Young Blood used some of the kainde amedha's blood to engrave a symbol onto his pectoral then his bio mask. She raised an eyebrow at him. He didn't remember Dae'er mentioning this act. She did recall his bio mask and all of its engravings though. Even though she didn't recognize the symbol, it didn't mean it wasn't there. Must've been something else Yautja do to prove themselves.

"So what are we going to do with him?" She asked the Yautja as he secured his bio mask back into place.

She turned from him to keep watch. "Should we just let him go or leave him in here? What do you think?" She asked as she looked back in time to see the Yautja plunge his wrist blades through the man's chest. "Well, ok then."

It bothered her that he just killed him for no reason but if Dae'er's lessons taught her anything it was that a quick death was preferable. At least he died instantly instead of being eaten or burned with acid.

"Couldn't we have just left him in here? The explosion would've killed him." She added.

"H-ko. He was infected with kainde amedha young." He said as he walked by her and began punching buttons on his wrist computer.

"So we can leave now?" She questioned.

"After we get my brother." He replied and she followed him over to the now dead Yautja. "He completed his chiva, that makes him an honorable male and he deserves a ceremony." He

added as he lifted the lifeless corpse and fireman carried him through the hall.

“So now what? They come and get us and we demolish this place?” She questioned.

“We set off a bomb but it does not demolish the pyramid. It’s more of a cleansing.” He replied

So they were just cleaning it out for the next group. She didn’t really care what happened at this point, she was just ready to be back with Dae’er. She had anticipated this trip for a while but as soon as she experienced it, she just wanted to hurry and get out. She was thrilled to know that she had technically won the whole who can kill the most crap contest but it was also a mind melting adventure.

They exited the pyramid and entered the dense jungle. The daylight was extremely bright, even with her mask on. They were heading to the rendezvous area and Erie thought they were moving way too slow. She wanted to run for it, she wanted to run right into Dae’er’s arms and let him hold her. She whined impatiently and the Yautja beside her huffed.

“Even if we ran to the meeting point, we’d still have to wait for them to descend to collect us.” He said as he adjusted his brother on his shoulder.

“Well the faster we get there the quicker they can start to descend.” He scoffed at her and she couldn’t wait any longer.

She bolted for the clearing, practically flew through the jungle. She wanted to see Dae’er, she wanted to go home. She looked up at the sky, hoping to see some sign of the ship. Her acquaintance arrived and laughed at her.

“Told you, ooman.” He sneered as he laid his brother in the grass.

She was about to say something smart when the pyramid exploded. Even though she knew it was going to happen she still ducked and covered. The place sounded like it completely collapsed instead of just getting cleansed. The whirring sound of the thrusters on the ship drew her attention from the explosion.

The ship opened and Dae’er was the first one to exit. She smiled and dashed to him, leaping into his arms. She had never felt so happy to see someone in her entire life. She felt like she hadn’t seen him in months. He held her tightly to his body and she buried her face into his neck.

He set her down and removed his bio mask. “No’elia, you have made me a proud Yautja. Your first hunt and you exceeded well beyond expectation. You have tied with me in the record for killing the most kainde amedha during a chiva. You are an exceptional huntress.” He dropped to one knee and gave her the honorary salute she had seen many Yautja give him.

The other two teachers also gave her the salute and she couldn’t help but blush with embarrassment. She felt like she had to say something but all she managed to get out was a bunch of stuttering. A record? Her? She had tied with Dae’er, the strongest Yautja alive, in killing kainde amedha on a chiva? It didn’t seem real. She was only a human.

Dae’er reattached his mask then turned his attention to the Yautja that had made it out with her. Dae’er stiffened and the other teachers did too. She glanced between them and the newly blooded Yautja trying to figure out what they were seeing.

“No’elia, step inside the ship.” Dae’er instructed her.

“What’s going on?” She asked as she did as she was told.

She stood inside the doorway and watched as the young Yautja dropped to his knees and roared in pain. What in the world? She didn’t see him get hit by anything so why was he crying out in pain. Dae’er extended his wrist blades and approached the male that was now clutching his chest.

The sound of breaking bone and ripping flesh could be heard. The young Yautja’s chest burst open and a huge worm sprung out at Dae’er. Her Yautja Prince was fast though, and caught the thing mid air. It wriggled and struggled to get free of Dae’er’s iron grip. Dae’er reached up with his other hand and tore the worm clean in two. He dropped the pieces on the ground then severed the young Yautja’s head clean off his shoulders.

“Dishonorable.” He snarled.

Erie watched as one of the teachers handed him a vial of blue liquid. Dae’er opened it and poured the contents on the young Yautja’s body and his brothers. Both of the corpses melted away to nothing. She didn’t understand, they had killed kainde amedha and completed their chivas. So why did Dae’er kill them and destroy the bodies?

When he was finished, Dae’er stood and walked back onto the ship with the other teachers following him. Erie jogged to keep up with them as they went back into the control room.

“I don’t understand. They completed their chivas.” She stated.

“When you first entered the pyramid, those two Young Bloods went straight for the queen’s chamber. The queen is responsible for producing the eggs that hatch the kainde amedha. They tried to kill her and even restrained she is strong. The one became wounded and the other infected because they were inexperienced. They weren’t supposed to be in there. They were dishonorable for not obeying the rules.” Dae’er explained.

“But he made a kill.” She uttered quietly.

“It did not matter at that point in time. He had already failed long before then. Do not feel sorry for them No’elia, they knew the rules. They knew the guidelines they were supposed to follow. They were clearly not ready for their chivas.” He sat down in his seat and prepared to leave the planet.

She didn’t understand how four of them went in and only she came out. If she could’ve placed a bet before they began, she would’ve put all her money on the Yautja’s. How could they all have failed? They were much faster, stronger, and they had better senses than she did. She stared at Dae’er a moment. She was still in disbelief that she tied with his record. She could only imagine that his chiva had more planned situations than hers did. Most of the stuff she did was just accidental.

“Is it normal for four to go in and only one make it out?” She questioned as she took a seat as close to Dae’er as she could.

“Sei-i. This is a test of not only skill but character as well. If you are weak mentally or lack honor in your heart, you will not survive a chiva. You went in doubting yourself but you remained focused on what you needed to do and you utilized all of your training. You may

have been frail compared to them but you were strong where it mattered.” He placed a fist at his heart and lightly tapped it. “It is very common for Young Bloods to go into their chivas and never see the light of the sun again. There is plenty of failure and very little success.” He started the ship and the seat belt slid around Erie on its own.

She had more questions but he seemed preoccupied at the moment. She wondered if he were the last one standing during his chiva. Her humanity was screaming at her that everything the Yautja do was completely outrageous. Allowing the young generation to march into a death trap just so they prove they were stronger than the guy next to him. It was crazy but she understood why. It was how they guaranteed that the next generation would be strong.

Those three males that perished were obviously flawed somewhere and they would’ve produced more flawed offspring. It was all just one big way of flushing out the bad so they knew who was good. That was why they didn’t make a big deal about losing them. Why mourn the loss of someone who would’ve put a kink in their chain?

With that logic, Dae’er must be a diamond amongst coal. She knew very little about the rankings the Yautja used but she did know that Dae’er was the youngest Elder she had seen so far. She had once questioned who was in charge and he showed her holographic images of all the ancients and Elders. The other ones looked hundreds of years older than Dae’er and only now did she realize just how strong he really was.

He had surpassed beyond the normalities. Killed his way up the ladder and earned his well deserved spot. What she did back in the pyramid was nothing compared to what he must’ve done. She had been with Dae’er for 53 Earth years and he still never ceased to amaze her.

She sat back in her seat and looked at the other two Yautja who were extremely quiet. All of their trainees had failed, she imagined some would look to them for blame. The bigger one noticed her gawking and he let out a snarl. She diverted her attention to Dae’er instead or at least until the windshield closed off and the lights went out. She was exhausted and couldn’t wait to crawl into Dae’er’s enormous bed of furs. She was certain she would sleep for days.

Chapter 13

Hello everyone! I've got a confession to make... there are 27 seven full chapters of this story all written out, it's just..the editing, ugh! It's a pain in the butt but I'm working on it, I promise! My goal today is two to three chapters edited and posted so hopefully I won't get distracted, fingers crossed.

As for this chapter, I feel it's a little meh, I've read it and read it and tried to alter things but I'm not 100% satisfied with it and it's a crucial point in the timeline for the story. So reluctantly, I'm posting it. I hope it's not too disappointing and at least mildly interesting.

I absolutely LOVE getting reviews and new followers or favorites, it truly makes my day. I know I say something about it on every chapter I post but it's just so inspiring to see so many new friends! I appreciate and cherish each new reader and their opinion so much that if I could I'd hug each and every one of you! You guys make my day! :) In response to the reader that has found encouragement from my story to write their own, that's wonderful and I plan on reading the first chapter tonight! In response to the reader questioning No'elia's wound from Chapter 10, her mi flower! It's so powerful and I regret not writing more about it's potential early on. It's like having a portable healer to mend and fix wounds or breaks so that nasty gash she got from training, all better with a short amount of time :)

Again, I appreciate EVERY review and I can't stress enough how important ALL of your reviews are to me! Just knowing someone looked at my story is a gift in itself :D

Enough of the blabbing, on to the story!

Thank you for choosing Devotion!

Disclaimer: I do not own Predator or Alien or any character pertaining to the Predator, Alien or AVP franchise!

When Dae'er docked the ship and escorted No'elia into the port, his sire was waiting for them. A massive crowd had gathered around their legendary king. He guessed that his sire was only here because No'elia was the only Young Blood to complete her chiva. Either that or he was displeased with the fact that an ooman companion was being treated like a Yautja. He needed to speak to his father anyway about marking No'elia with her success and about mating her.

Dae'er watched as his father walked up to No'elia and towered over her. She was afraid but she was doing well to hide it. He eyed her up and down and encircled her like a vulture would a corpse. She shuddered but there was no h'dui'se of h'dlak coming from her tiny form. He stopped back in front of her and let out a soft growl. Knowing his sire, the growl wasn't because he was angry or upset, it was just an action that occurred whenever he was interested in something. He clearly was intrigued by No'elia for some reason.

“What does my son call you?” His deep hollow voice silenced the chatter of the crowd instantly.

No’elia looked up at Dae’er and he nodded at her to answer his sire.

“Er.” She started but immediately corrected herself. “No’elia.”

“No’eli? Does the name represent your dtai’kai’-dte style?” His sire was talking straight to No’elia and it bothered him slightly.

“Well,” She swallowed hard then cleared her throat. “My ooman name means cat and Dae’er just changed it to the Yautja version.”

His sire’s brow furrowed. “You call your n’yaka-de by his birth name?” He asked suspiciously as he glanced at Dae’er. “Not even a rank or title before it.” His sire’s question and statement had the crowd whispering again and Dae’er knew they were talking about him. He raised his tresses in anger.

“I just..” No’elia started but his sire abruptly interrupted her.

“Silence, ooman.” He said as he turned his attention to Dae’er. He stared at him through his bio mask, doing what he always tried to do to Dae’er and his mei’hswei. The dominant glare was his way of intimidating him, testing his patience and his anger.

Dae’er let out a huff and emitted a low warning growl. His father let out a deep rumbling laugh.

“You threaten me with a challenge, son? Over this ooman?” His sire asked. “Does this lou-dte kale mean that much to you?” He watched his father turn from him then he reached out and grabbed No’elia by the front of her coverings. She gasped as he brought her up to his face, pressing hers into his and meeting her deknas. His biomask was firm against her forehead and she tilted her syra’yte away then winced in discomfort.

The h’dui’s of her h’dlak washed through Dae’er’s body like a massive tidal wave, begging him to interfere and protect her. He was torn between respecting his king and taking care of No’elia. His chest rose and fell with animosity and his hands clenched tightly into fists as he was barely able to restrain his reaction.

“What does he see in you that no other Yautja can get a glimpse of?” He asked No’elia in a whisper.

She struggled in his sire’s grasp and when tears began to leak from the corner’s of her deknas, a clear sign of her h’dlak, did his sire finally let go. She dropped to the floor and grunted from the impact then scrambled back to Dae’er’s legs. He squatted down and took her into his arms, comforting her as he stroked her mane.

His father extended his arms and turned to look out at the crowd. “My son, a prince, a prodigy, brought to his knees by a lou-dte kale ooman!” His sire bellowed. He turned to Dae’er and removed his bio mask, lowering his tone. “Go on, my son, ask me. State your request in front of your own kind. Elaborate to them what I already know of.”

Dae’er’s anger had risen greatly and the crowd closest to him backed away from him in response. His sire stood his ground, confident that Dae’er was of no threat to him. No’elia had

also tucked herself away, realizing the amount of fury he was putting off. His patience with his father was thinning with every taunt he elicited.

His father chuckled. "Fine, I'll grant you your request to mate her. I encourage it. Mark her, rut on her, do what you must. There is only one condition to this allowance."

"And what is this stipulation?" Dae'er snarled.

His father waited to respond, stretching out that horrible tension in the air until it was as thin as Dae'er's thwei right now. "She will join the Blooded sain'jas on the game preserve in six seasons." He stated sharply as he moved his tusks upwards into a grin.

"H-ko." Dae'er said firmly.

"Then you will never mate her and she will never be considered an equal amongst our kind!" His father retorted.

"She is not strong enough!" Dae'er bellowed as he stood abruptly to his feet, squaring up his shoulders towards his father.

"Then *make* her strong enough! In six seasons, she *will* join the Blooded sain'jas, ready or not. If she doesn't, it will be your blade she falls to." His sire stared him right in the deknas, serious as the sun rises every morning.

"You will be forcing her to kill her own kind. How could she live honorably?" Dae'er questioned.

"You wanted her to be considered an equal. You are begging your people to take her in as one of their own. Once you mate her and claim her as yours, she will be expected to act like a Yautja and hunting oomans is what Yautja's do. If she can not perform in six seasons then it will be on you and no one else." His sire looked at No'elia and scoffed before turning to leave.

The crowd seemed to move with him as he went. This wasn't what Dae'er had expected. Usually the new Blooded sain'ja returned to a crowd cheering and applauding their hard work, welcoming back an esteemed sain'ja, instead, No'elia was humiliated. If she was his future mate, then she deserved a revelry, just like the rest that completed their chivas.

"Sire!" Dae'er called out sternly and his father stopped to barely glance over his shoulder at him. "A revelry in her honor."

His father narrowed his deknas and the crowd went silent again as they awaited his answer. "Mate her then you may have your revelry." He said as he looked away and continued on his way out of the port.

At least there was one good thing to come of all this. He gestured for No'elia to follow him and she quickly joined his side. He shoved through the gathered crowd toward his wing of the citadel. He was eager to leave this mess, just as much as he was eager to not hear his name whispered out in the masses again.

"What just happened? What did he mean by you mating me and what's a game preserve?" No'elia questioned as she jogged to keep up with him.

He didn't respond to her as there were Yautja watching them like a hawk. He was sure that him and No'elia would be the talk at the meal table for years. A Yautja had never mated a ooman, not ever, and never had an ooman been considered equal. By mating her, he would be changing history but he was certain that No'elia would bring great yin'tekai to his kind. Her will was strong and her heart was big. She had everything a Yautja could hope to have.

He entered his dwellings and No'elia immediately laid on the sofa. He walked over to her and she sat up to make room for him. When he seated himself, she rested her syra'yte on his thigh and he immediately pulled the tie from her dark mane, freeing the strands so he could run his claws through it.

"What's a game preserve, Dae'er?" She asked again.

"It's a planet, much like the one where I kv'var the G'eru, and it's been modified for hunting more threatening prey." He explained.

"Like the kainde amedha?" She questioned.

"No, much more dangerous prey. The planet is divided into sections and a few sain'ja are assigned to each one then different species of prey are dropped in for them to kv'var. Usually oomans and River Ghosts. Every now and then Bad Bloods that have been captured alive are sent there as well." He lifted her small hand that was attached to her injured arm and examined it.

"That doesn't sound too bad. I know oomans, I know how they think. It shouldn't be too hard." She stated.

"No'elia, the game preserve is nothing like the chiva grounds. The area is open, there are hardly places for you to hide if you get into trouble and like before, I can not assist you." He said.

"You are doubting me?" She questioned and he looked at her in awe.

He remembered him asking her that same question and now it was she who was inquiring him of his trust in her. He had to admit that there was some doubt back at the chiva grounds but she had excelled astronomically. Maybe if he started training her right away, she could possibly be ready in time. The prey that was dropped was random, there was no guarantee what was going to be in there, could be all River Ghosts or oomans, or a mixture. He'd have to train her against all three possible enemies.

He trilled at her. "H-ko doubt, just worried about time." He said as he laid her arm back down after determining the mi flower was healing it well.

"You're a great trainer, I'm sure you will show me everything I need to know or do." She raised up and pressed her soft lips to his mandible.

She jumped up off the couch and clasped her hands together. "So, what do we need to do first?" He found it hard to be so upset when she was so chipper and determined.

He removed his bio mask and hung it on his belt. "The mating." He answered.

"Right, and what exactly does that mean? Because where I come from it means doing the deed. Is that what we need to do?" She asked.

“H-ko. It’s more of a ceremony. Your skin will be marked with the symbols that represent my bloodline. Something that you will bear for the rest of your life to show that you belong to me.” He said as he stood and walked over to her.

“Do all the girls have to go through that?” She asked.

“H-ko. Only the ones that are claimed as a mate.” He replied.

“Like how your mei’hswei took Talia as a mate?” Her voice wavered as he came closer to her.

“Sei-i.”

“Oh, alright then, a few tattoos, h-ko problem. I like tattoos as long as they’re not scrubbed off later.” She stiffened slightly as he came so close, he could feel the small heat of her body radiating onto his. “So where will these tattoos go?” She questioned.

“Here.” He said as he ran his hand down both her arms. ‘Here.’ He said as he trailed his claws down her spine, causing her to arch her back in reflex. “Here.” He said as he lowered himself to lightly scratch his tusks around her abdomen. “And here.” He moved his hands down her thighs and she let out a soft moan.

“Wow, that’s a lot of tattoos for one go.” She mumbled.

“Everyone must know that you are mine.” He growled lightly as he moved his hands back up her thighs and under her coverings, caressing and gently squeezing her buttocks with his palms.

She gasped and her body shuddered. He opened his mandibles and lightly dragged his fangs down her smooth thigh causing her to place her hands on his shoulders to hold herself up from her knees going weak. He lightly tugged on her bottom coverings, pulling them down to her ankles for her to step out of. Her arousal flooded out and he let out a soft growl as he lifted her up by her bottom and placed her on the edge of the couch. He bowed his syra’yte and continued to drag his fangs down her body until he got to her center. Her h’dui’sé was making his mouth water and his erection strained against his codpiece.

He lifted her left leg and placed it over his shoulder then he gently rubbed his knuckle against her core, brushing the sensitive area and causing enticing little sighs to escape her lips. When she was slick and his knuckle was saturated, he spread his mandibles, taking care of where he situated them on her skin then he placed his mouth to her core and flicked his tongue against her. Her back arched and she choked on a surprised seductive moan. He held her in place as he traced her folds with his tongue, occasionally returning to her core to send a jolt of pleasure through her. Her warm wet nectar coated his mouth and he used his tongue to lap at her opening, savoring every bit of it.

His hands were firm against her thigh and stomach and her tiny fingers were latched onto them. He snaked his right hand down her body then slowly slid his middle finger into her tight opening. She rocked her hips, grinding her walls against his claw and panting out more sensual sighs. He loved watching and feeling her writhe from the pleasure he gave her, it pleased him to know his female was being well satisfied by him.

She let out small whimpers as her body trembled from her release. Her sweet nectar coated her opening even more and he pulled out his claw to lick away the remnants. She laid on the

couch, her once writhing body now stilled as it enjoyed what he had bestowed upon it.

Her chest steadily rose and fell and her hand glided over her olive colored skin, trailing from her hip to her breasts. She parted her slender legs wider, revealing everything to him. She dipped her fingers into her opening, soaking them in that bittersweet honey.

She brought them up like she was going to suck it off those nimble appendages, but he quickly grabbed her wrist and slid her fingers into his mouth, scraping them along his fangs as he did. She gasped as he pulled them out slowly, making sure to remove every drop off her skin. He watched as she tucked her bottom lip under her front teeth then grabbed a hold of his awu'asa netting and yanked him up towards her chest.

Her ability to even budge him had his malehood pulsating. She urged him up closer to her face until his tusks were scraping along her cheeks and jawline. He purred when he felt her soft ooman lips against his mouth then her tiny warm tongue began to explore the inside of his jaw. He propped himself up with his arms on both sides of her body, engulfing her beneath him. Her action was something new but he enjoyed every second of it. Her tongue traced his fangs and sucked on his when he went to taste the inside of her mouth.

Pauk. He couldn't wait any longer. He pulled his mouth away from hers and growled as he lifted her up off the couch and carried her into his dwellings. He hastily pulled off the rest of her awu'asa and yanked off his codpiece and loin cloth. His malehood was so firm that it ached for release. He wasted no time in leaning over her and guiding himself into her warm slick folds.

He slid himself inside of her and she arched her back at his intrusion. She gasped then the gasp melted into a low sensual moan. Her legs were spread wide for his girth and one hand was wrapped around his back while the other was tight around his forearm. Her breasts were firm and supple and her nipples were nice and pert. He bowed his syra'yte and flicked his tongue against one causing her back to arch and her hips to tip and slide her soft walls against his malehood.

He slid his hand under her body, supporting her lower back and raising her up closer to his groin. He moved slowly in and out of her at first and as soon as he felt her body relax he thrust hard into her heat. She mewled everytime he shoved back inside of her, over and over again. When he felt her squeezing his length and her legs twitching beside his sides from her second release, he moved his hands to her hips and slammed into her harder. He held her in place as he drove himself to the hilt deep inside of her warmth. When he felt the tip of his malehood colliding with her end, he roared in satisfaction and spilled his seed into her.

His claws embedded into her flesh as his release continued to flood out. An entire minute went by until his peak began to flutter away. His seed overflowed out of her and was trickling down his leg. He looked down at her exhausted form and her heart rate was still beating fast but her deknas were closed as they readied for sleep. He shifted them together, making sure to keep himself buried deep inside of her, so that she was laying on top of him with her syra'yte against his chest.

She mumbled at his disturbance but quickly began to doze off again when he stroked her mane. It was charming how tired she got from their mating. The action had the opposite effect on him, it gave him energy and adrenaline and made him feel pumped. He wanted to stride through the halls of the citadel, showing everyone that he was successful in mating his

female. It was what every male Yautja did to show that their successes had gained them the attention of a female, proving that they are worthy to other females, not that he was interested in anyone but No'elia, it was just a way to taunt everyone.

No'elia stirred and mumbled something. He hummed a soft trill and she tilted her face away from his chest so she could be heard.

"Is it possible for me to get pregnant?" She muttered.

He rumbled a growl in his chest at her surprising question. "H-ko." He replied quickly.

She raised her syra'yte to look at him. "There was a girl in the daycare who was pregnant. Seleana said she wasn't pregnant before and then all of a sudden she was." Dae'er couldn't recall anything about a pregnant companion, not that he paid attention to any of the conversations at the meal table anyway.

Regardless of what No'elia had seen, it wasn't possible for oomans to become pregnant by Yautja. They were essentially two different species, even if their anatomy was nearly the same. If No'elia could carry his young though, it would certainly please him and fulfill his role as a male.

"It isn't possible. The companion must've been fertilized by an ooman male or perhaps she was taken while she was already with young." He answered as he wrapped the strands of her hair around his fingers.

"Are you sure it's not possible?" She questioned again.

"Sei-i." He replied. Sensing her slight dejection, he pressed the matter. "You wish to carry my young?"

Her syra'yte snapped back up and she stared at him wide eyed. She stammered on her reply nervously and he trilled at her reaction. Every female wants to fulfill her purpose by bearing pups, even ooman ones. No'elia might be afraid of it now but she will eventually become saddened by the matter. He didn't look forward to that time in her life as he would never be able to fill that void. He could shower her with pets of her own, find a million ways to occupy her mind and even overwhelm her with training and hunting but the urge to feel the fondness of a pup will eventually become too strong for her to ignore. He had witnessed it himself amongst Yautja females that had pledged themselves to servitude. They had drove themselves hulij-bpe from not fulfilling their main purpose in life. Most would take dishonorable deaths while others would seduce Young Bloods into getting what they desired. Either way was considered shameful among his kind.

"I would if you wanted me to." She stared at him with sincere deknas.

Her answer wasn't what he expected. He expected her to deny it, to treat him like he was hulij-bpe and absurd but instead she was willing. It was a perfect answer to him even if she was leaving the decision up to him. He purred at her in satisfaction and gathered her mane to one side, letting it fall across his chest and arm.

She laid her syra'yte back down on his chest. "So when am I getting those tattoos?" She asked sleepily.

"As soon as you want them." He replied.

She nuzzled her face into his neck and relaxed against his body. His dai-shui and her h'dui'se lingered in the air. A h'dui'se he could never get tired of. He decided to give her his gift after her markings during the ceremony. Seven months ago he never would've guessed he'd be where he was today. Lying in his bed with a female ooman curled up on his chest. Having a mate used to be the last thing on his to do list and now it was sitting heavily at the top. No'elia was the most important item in his life and he was certain he'd be lost without her warmth against his skin every night. Her steady breathing meant that she had fallen asleep. He figured a few hours of rest wouldn't hurt anything and when he awoke, it would be straight to an Ancient so he could finally mark No'elia as his own.

Like always, he awoke before No'elia and immediately contacted an Ancient. The Ancient wasn't the one who did the marking but one had to be present to make sure the writing was substantial and as proof that Dae'er hadn't done it himself. After painstakingly asking several Ancients, he finally found one to agree. It was one of the Ancients that had attended his promotion to becoming an Elder. He was a curious male, always inquisitive about everyone elses buisness and something like what Dae'er and No'elia was doing was definitely something that intrigued him.

He woke No'elia and she promptly got dressed. She was as eager as he was to complete the mating ceremony. They didn't need to leave the citadel as there was an area made especially for this.

He escorted No'elia through the citadel and into the room where the mating would be held. The room was octagon shaped and had walls made of glass so inhabitants of the citadel could watch but they were sound proof as not to disturb the artist in charge of creating the markings. There was a table covered in a black fur pelt and it had a small fur pillow at one end. Beside the table was a stool for the artist as well as a rack that held a tray of small pots, filled to the brim with black stain and lined up beside the engraving tool.

Normally something as big as a mating would take a couple of months to organize. Family members were invited for front row seats, a private gathering before hand to discuss any terms or dowry and then a huge celebration afterwards. Some of the aristocratic Yautja would even have special coverings made to show their rank in the society. Since him and No'elia were already practically cast out, he didn't see any reason to wait. His family definitely didn't seem interested in viewing or they'd be here now. He didn't see any reason to get traditional with it and the only thing that mattered to him was that he finally would have No'elia all to himself.

No'elia wrapped her hand around his and looked at him in confusion. She tucked her body close to his when another door opened and the artist and the Ancient appeared together. The artist took his seat and the Ancient stood beside the table, dressed in the ceremonial coverings that were the colors of his clan.

"Prince Dae'er, it is a pleasure to see you again and at another milestone in your life." The Ancient gave him the honorary na'tauk and Dae'er returned it. 'Let's get started, shall we?' The male said as he motioned them towards a pedestal in the center of the room. "First, the drinking of c'nlip." He said and a servant brought out a bottle and one goblet and handed it to the Ancient then quickly departed.

Dae'er saw a large crowd gathering outside the walls and No'elia noticed them as well as she looked around with panicked deknas. He purred to her in reassurance and petted her mane. He knew that either no one would come to watch or everyone would show up. Something as taboo as what Dae'er was doing would certainly stir up a crowd of curious deknas, hopefully they wouldn't become too overwhelming.

"By allowing this female to sip from your chalice, you are showing to all that you will be the one that cares for her the rest of her days. When the chalice is empty, it will be you who is responsible for refilling it." He poured the c'nlip into the goblet then passed it to Dae'er.

He looked down at No'elia, arched his brow then drank from the cup. He then brought it to No'elia's soft lips and she took a long heavy swig. She seemed as if she wanted to finish it but it was customary to leave some of the c'nlip in it, something that symbolized that her cup would never be empty. He handed the chalice back to the Ancient and he set it on a nearby pedestal then he picked up a ceremonial dagger.

"With this blade you give your life to her." The Ancient said as he handed the dagger over to Dae'er and he took it from him.

No'elia looked frightened from the Ancient's words but he only meant he had to give some of his thwei. He pressed the blade against his palm and sliced through his thick skin. The artist handed him an empty pot and Dae'er filled it to the brim with his green thwei then handed it back to him. The Ancient handed him a small towel and Dae'er traded him the dagger for it. He placed the blade beside the chalice and continued.

"By covering her in the symbol of your lineage, you are binding her to your bloodline. A new branch amongst your family's tree." The Ancient nodded at Dae'er and Dae'er turned to No'elia.

He purred to try and keep her calm but the c'nlip was already affecting her, doing what his purring normally would do. He gently undressed her, removing every article of clothing. He didn't like this part especially since there were so many viewers but it was part of the ceremony. He body blocked the others but still left her visible to the Ancient. It was customary to show the Ancient and his kin, if there were any, that she was flawless and worthy of being mated with and also, if the situation applied, that her body was healthy enough to bear pups.

Satisfied, the Ancient nodded then gestured at the table and Dae'er scooped up her naked body and laid her on her stomach. She fought a little but then stilled when he purred to her some more and stroked her mane. The artist poured some of Dae'er's thwei into an empty pot then poured some of the black stain into it, mixing it together. He then dipped his engraving tool into the mixture and activated it.

No'elia gasped when the sharp tip hit the top of her spine, right below her neck. Dae'er pressed his hand against the small of her back to help hold her in place. She whimpered from sudden sharp pain but he knew she wasn't in severe trouble as the artist was quick and professional as he engraved the symbols of Dae'er's lineage down her spine. He added unique detail to the symbols making them much more attractive and impressive.

He stopped at the top of her buttocks then he reached into a leather bag and pulled out a hand full of red powder. He smeared it all over the symbols, mixing it with the drops of

crimson thwei that had gathered from No'elia's sensitive skin. He then wiped it away with a cloth to reveal beautiful red coloring that faded into the black stain creating a unique look. Dae'er trilled in approval and then the artist gestured for him to turn No'elia onto her side.

The artist added more symbols to the side of her thigh starting at the top and ending just before the knee. He added more red powder and Dae'er turned her onto her back.

She smiled weakly up at him as she covered her breasts and her deknas filled with unspilled tears. Even with the c'nlip, the engraving had to hurt tremendously, especially on her sensitive ooman skin. He stroked her cheek then went back to watching the artist. She closed her deknas when the artist began to engrave down the center of her abdomen. He utilized the area where her umbilical cord once was, using a symbol that curved to circle around it. These engravings started just below her breasts and stopped right above her femalehood.

He repeated the process on her other thigh, smearing more red powder then he began on her arms. This time, he used the symbols to create a band around each of her biceps and Dae'er asked him to mark her with the symbol of her completed chiva right above the band and he obliged, giving No'elia an intricately designed mark. He didn't use the red powder on that one though and Dae'er was glad since it made her mating marks unique.

When he was done, Dae'er helped No'elia off the table and she wobbled like she was going to topple so he propped her up at his side. She crossed her legs tightly and covered her breasts to hide herself. The artist sprayed each marking with a protective sealant then he nodded at the Ancient.

The Ancient observed each one, certifying their authenticity. When he was satisfied, he presented No'elia with her new title.

"Blooded sain'ja, Ju'ha No'elia, mate of Dae'er, son of K'elar, descendant of Aj-K'elar." The Ancient broadcasted over the crowd and normally they would cheer but Dae'er didn't expect such a reaction.

To his surprise, some of the Yautja did cheer but a lot of them also glared at him and No'elia in distaste. He didn't care what they thought. No'elia was his now. Marked for the entire universe to see and no one was going to take her from him or they'd answer to his blades.

The Ancient handed Dae'er the new box he had made for his gift for No'elia and he held it so she could see. "I have a gift for you." He said.

"Another one?" She asked giving him a smile even though her deknas still showed she was in pain.

"Sei-i, another. It is a gift for completing your chiva beyond expectations and it is also a gift to celebrate our mating." He opened the box and her deknas went from pain filled to awe.

The reflection of the black pearl's star cluster patterns showed in her dark deknas. She ran her fingers lightly over the pendant, tracing it's shape.

"It's amazing. I.." She said before her voice cracked. Her deknas watered and she chuckled.

He picked up the necklace and handed the box to the Ancient. He laid the pendant on her chest then fastened the necklace securely at the base of her neck, careful not to scrape it against her new markings. Like he had imagined, the pendant laid right below her collarbone and the black metal symbol shined from the bright lights over head. She picked up the pendant and wrapped her fist around it.

“I love it. It’s the most amazing gift I’ve ever received. I’m never taking it off.” She said as she pressed her body against his and he gently chi’ytei her.

He couldn’t help but recall the last thing he had put around that slender neck of hers and it pained him to remember it. He enjoyed this decoration more than the original one. He couldn’t imagine her being anything else than exactly what she was now. She wasn’t a trophy or a slave, she was his mate and he planned on keeping her that way.

He would train her, shove every last ounce of his knowledge into her so that she could survive at the game preserve in six months. Luckily, she was eager and willing to listen to his teachings. Not only did she listen to them but she utilized every single one.

With the ceremony over, he scooped her up and carried her back towards his dwellings. He’d give her a day to heal but then he wanted to go straight into training her again. She had three new enemies she had to get to know and they were much more complex than the first one. He’d have to show her how to use other weapons and possibly upgrade her bio mask and give her her own wrist gauntlet. She’d need everything to beat her new prey and failure was definitely not an outcome he would allow.

Translation:

Ooman: Human

Kv’var: Hunt

Kainde Amedha: Hard meats, Xenomorphs, or what we know as the creatures from Alien.

Na’tauk: Salute

Sain’ja: Warrior

Dtai’kai’-dte: Fight/Battle

Awu’asa: Armor

Dekna(s): Eye/Eyes

H’dlak: Fear

No’eli: Cat/Feline

Thwei: Blood

C’nlip: Intoxicating Beverage, much stronger than human alcohol.

Kehrte: Training room, gym

Thar'n-dha: Strength

H'dui'se: Scent

Mei'hswei(s): Brother(s), also used as a term Yautja call other members of their clan.

yin-tekai: Honor

G'eru: Elephant like creatures

Sei-i: Yes

H'ko: No

ou-dte kale — Child-maker (female)

hulij-bpe — Crazy

n'yaka-de — Master

syr'a'yte — Head

chi'ytei — Embrace/Hug

Chapter 14

Well, this one was much easier to edit but I'm sure there's a mistake in there somewhere lol! I want to get material out for you guys so I'm with haste tonight. Please forgive something I might have missed.

Thank you for choosing Devotion!

Disclaimer: I do not own Predator or Alien or any character pertaining to the Predator, Alien or AvP franchise!

Erie opened her eyes and she was back in her apartment on Earth. Part of her knew she wasn't supposed to be here but her dream body continued to go about her daily rituals like nothing had changed. Starting up the Keurig, checking her phone and email, popping a plain bagel into the toaster and even retrieving the low fat cream cheese from the fridge was everything she did before work. She had forgotten how simple things were. How easy life was.

She sipped her coffee and leaned against her granite counter top savoring the sweet mocha slowly to warm her body from her sudden awakening. Her chest itched something furious and when her hand went to scratch, it collided with the cool metal.

She lifted the charm and looked at it in confusion. She couldn't recall having a necklace. All of a sudden her arm itched and she looked at her bicep to see a band of black and red symbols wrapped around her skin. She checked her other arm then she lifted her shirt and saw more tattoos on her stomach. It all itched and burned at the same time and her subconscious dream mind suddenly decided to remind her of what the unfamiliarity was.

Her cozy little kitchen melted into a jungle. She felt panic and fear as the sound of a kainde amedha growling resonated through her ears. She turned around in a circle, frantically searching for the source. She looked down at her silky night gown and a flush of crimson spread across the soft pink. Two metal blades appeared, the silver covered in her blood.

They retracted and she turned slowly to see Dae'er staring down at her. Her fear and panic turned into sorrow and confusion. She didn't understand. Dae'er would never hurt her, why was her mind playing such cruel tricks on her? Her heart suddenly felt empty and she felt betrayed. He raised his wrist blades and as soon as they were going to come down on her for the kill, her eyes shot open.

She frantically looked around, checking to make sure she wasn't in a jungle or at her apartment as she patted at her midsection for wounds. She was in Dae'er's bed, buried beneath a mountain of furs, Dae'er's doing she guessed. Her new tattoos were incredibly itchy though and they burned from the sweat she was pouring out. She quickly kicked off the furs then relaxed into the bed.

Her feelings for Dae'er in her dream were still affecting her demeanor, so much so that she found herself crying. She knew that she was growing incredibly attached to him, missed him when he was away and even lavished in his attention to her. She even considered carrying his offspring, if she could, so she didn't understand her nightmare at all.

Her fingers fooled with the black half dollar sized pendant that laid against her chest. It was so beautiful and she couldn't believe the insane looking pearls on it. They looked like tiny galaxies strung together on one string. Dae'er had told her that she was now considered a member of his kind, someone valuable and important, especially to him. Speaking of, where was he?

She looked around the room but didn't see Dae'er anywhere. Maybe he was at a meal or something. She slid over to the edge of the bed and winced as her spine tattoo peeled off some of the fur from the pelt beneath her. Her mi flower had healed her other tattoos wonderfully but the one on her spine had somehow received less attention. She waddled into the bathing room and grabbed a towel from a rack.

She slid her legs into the hot water of the pool, letting the brim wash over the bottom part of her thigh marking. When it didn't burn or seem to wash off, she entered the water fully. The warm liquid was like an instant relief and once her body was accustomed to the heat, she submerged herself beneath the surface. She swam over to where the waterfall was and paddled around to the back underneath the rock.

She didn't get hungry often but right now she was feeling like she needed some sustenance. Maybe it was because she burned up so much energy during her chiva. When she raised back up for a breath, she saw Dae'er standing at the edge of the pool in full armor. She smiled at him and waded over closer to him.

"How long was I asleep?" She asked.

"Several hours. Do you feel rejuvenated?" He asked.

"I do actually." She wanted to tell him about her nightmare but she wasn't sure how he would react. He might be upset if he found out her subconscious was having such horrid thoughts about him. She decided to set it on the back burner, for now.

"Come. Let me see your markings." He said as he squatted down beside the pool.

She climbed out slowly and a soft lulling growl emitted from his chest. It was a sound she was all too familiar with, a blatant signal that he liked seeing her naked body. She smirked and tilted her hip, giving him a little show. He looked at both of her thighs then her stomach. She turned for him to observe her spinal marking and he clicked his tusks together in displeasure.

"This one isn't healing well." He stood and examined her mi flower, tilting her head from side to side to get a good look at the roots. "Your flower seems fine. Rest on your abdomen the next time you lie down." He said as he gestured for her to follow him.

He went to the rack that held her armor and she noticed a few new accessories. He began attaching her arm and leg armor then he helped her into her skirt and top.

"I can do this myself." She chuckled.

“No, as your mate, I will dress you.” He said as he locked a new item around her left arm. ‘Your own wrist gauntlet. This will access doors, the temperature in the bathing pool, it can also contact my servant whom will now serve you as he does me. It controls the lights, all of my ships and even connects to my personal funds. I’ve changed the settings so that you can read them.’ He said as he opened it up to reveal English words and numbers . “This will be as important as your wrist blades. Without it, you may as well be lost.”

He closed the panel and Erie ran her fingers over the sleek black metal. He trusted her enough to give her access to his ships and his funds? Did that mean that she was free to go where she pleased? Do whatever she wanted to without him as an escort?

“What does this mean?” She asked as she laid her hand over the wrist computer.

“It means you are Yautja.” He said as he strapped on one of her sheaths and dagger.

“Will I return to the daycare?” She asked.

“H-ko, you no longer need to be watched. You are free to roam this citadel and the territory outside of it. I do ask that you inform me of your absence if I am not with you.” He said as he slid a leather strap through a buckle and pulled it tightly against her thigh.

“Of course.” She nodded. “Could I still visit Seleana?”

He began attaching the other sheath as he thought about her question. His long pause made her slightly nervous. “You may go where you please.” He replied but she sensed a bit of reluctance in his tone.

She was glad she didn’t have to give up her friend. Especially since Seleana was having a hard time adjusting to Talia and Dae’er’s brother. She couldn’t wait to show her all of her new items and her new markings, she’ll be so happy for her.

He placed a new piece of armor on top of her shoulders and she stiffened to hold up the weight. “What’s this for?” She strained out as he adjusted it.

“Just seeing if it suits you.” He replied as he continued to position it.

It looked almost like Dae’er’s except hers covered both shoulders. It had the same mounting on the left side though and she was curious as to what went there. He snarled in dissatisfaction and removed it from her shoulders.

“Perhaps a handheld would suit you.” He placed the pauldrons back on the rack and picked up her bio mask.

“I’ve made some adjustments to your mask.” He said as he fastened it to her face. “You can now cloak and go invisible like I do but it will take practice to perfect it without a delay. I will show you when we begin training again.”

“Can I actually make a request?” She said meekly. He tilted his head at her in curiosity. ‘Can I get something with more coverage? Like long sleeves and perhaps something to protect my thighs? It was a pretty close encounter with the kainde amedhas, you know, guts and stuff.’ She said motioning over her midsection. “I just don’t want my skin to melt off.”

He trilled at her. “I will have the armory begin designing something for you urgently.” He said as he moved towards the door to leave.

"I'm kind of hungry." She stated and he turned to face her.

"We are on our way to First Meal now." He answered as he headed for the door.

"I'm going with you?" She questioned.

"Sei-i, you will join me at every meal now. It is what is expected of you as my mate." He led the way down the hall then stopped and waited for her to catch up.

He stroked her hair and slowed his stride so she could keep up. Her new bio mask was identifying every face that looked her way, showing her their name and their rank. Most were unranked and a lot were aristocratic. Every now and then, a distinguished male or female would come up as Blooded or Elite. She wondered what she came up as.

"Dae'er." She said and he clicked to acknowledge her. "What does the mask say about my ranking?" She questioned.

"It first tells me that you are ooman, then tells me you are Blooded and alerts that you are my mate." He answered.

"Does it show that to everyone?" She asked.

"Sei-i." He replied and she tried to imagine her face being targeted with the blinking red circle and a flood of words beside it.

It was interesting how fast the information had been updated. There must be someone plugging in everything that occurs into a system every five minutes or so.

They passed the hallway that led to the daycare and she looked down at the familiar zone. Part of her was glad she never had to go there again. The other part felt sorry for every single girl that still had to be forced to wait there, never knowing what will happen next or how long they'd be waiting. It was almost like torture, torture she never had to endure ever again.

He continued on until they entered a large area full of Yautja of every shape and size. Some were wearing bio masks while others were without one. Some were highly decorated with symbols and brightly colored rings in their dreads while others were plain and ordinary. Almost every female was coming up as aristocratic on her mask and only one she could see was a Blooded like her. One thing they all seemed to have in common was that they had suddenly went quiet and was watching her and Dae'er making their way through the crowd to the two doors at the front of the room.

They parted and made room for his approach. Some looked curious while others looked upon her with sneers and disgust. She couldn't blame them, she was the alien here, the stranger, the wolf amongst their sheep. They had no choice but to hold their tongues and show her the same respect as they did Dae'er.

They reached two metal double doors and two servants opened them. An enormous and vast dining room filled with multiple large dining tables lay before her. Each wooden table had to hold forty something people at least. Dae'er placed his hand gently against her back and guided her to the head of a table in the center of the room. A massive black wood chair graced the end and was cushioned with black fur. She guessed that seat was for Dae'er as a servant pulled it out for him. Another servant pulled out a chair to Dae'er's right and she promptly took the seat.

Dae'er let out a loud harumph and more Yautja came in and filled the empty table one by one. They continued with the pattern until the table was full, then servants wheeled out large trays and placed them all along the table. Huge massive hunks of meat made up the majority of the food and several bowls were being passed around with their contents being scooped out onto plates.

A servant poured a familiar blood red drink into her medieval looking cups and she picked it up then sipped from it. The light burning sensation on her tongue confirmed her suspicion. It was the same stuff she drank at her and Dae'er's mating ceremony. That stuff had instantly given her a good buzz and numbed up her body pretty well. It also had made her sleepy and she didn't want to feel groggy so early in the day. She placed the chalice back down and drank her water instead.

Dae'er lifted her plate from her setting and she watched as he placed several pieces of meat onto it then something that resembled braided bread and finally scooped out a wad of orange goop from one of the passing bowls. He set the plate back in front of her and she looked at him in confusion.

She had pictured First Meal being more like breakfast and not dinner. Her plate looked exactly like it would during Thanksgiving. She looked around for a utensil but found none. She glanced around the table and saw everyone using their claws to shovel the food into her mouths. She had never seen Dae'er eat before or any Yautja for that matter and it was quite an interesting occurrence.

They had no lips so they'd use the inside of their mandibles to hold the food close to their mouths then their sharp fangs ripped through the meat, breaking it down into smaller chunks then swallowing it. The bites would easily choke a human but she guessed they were the right size for a Yautja.

"Is your food not adequate?" Dae'er asked drawing the attention of their nearby company.

Her eyes shifted nervously between each face, watching her mask identify them. "Um, it's just a new experience for me." She said as she scooped up a piece of the orange goop with her fingertip and sucked it off with her mouth.

It was tangy and citrusy, not her favorite thing but it was alright. Could've been worse, she guessed. She picked up a slice of the meat and took a bite out of it. It surprisingly didn't taste how it looked. It looked like a piece of pot roast but tasted just like a charred piece of steak. She took another bite and savored it a little longer. This was actually delicious. It was the first time in six months that she had something savory to eat. Dae'er had been bringing her desserts as a treat and he'd taken her to the spa place for supplements but to feel actual meat in her mouth was exhilarating.

She finished off the meat then picked up the braided bread. She glanced at Dae'er and he was in the middle of pulling his apart, separating the multi colored strands and then only eating the lighter ones, occasionally dipping it in the goop. She smiled at his picky eating and found it quite cute.

She did as Dae'er had done and pulled the braid apart. She first sampled the darkest strand and it was dry and not what she enjoyed about bread. She tried the middle shade and thought that it was just okay. She finally ate the pieces that Dae'er seemed to favor and it was like

biting into a soft warm pretzel. No wonder he only ate this part, it was amazing. If only she had a little cheese to dip it in, it'd be phenomenal.

Another bowl came by and Dae'er scooped a blue glob onto her plate and his own before passing it to the next person. Based on the orange goop, she guessed this one would taste like blueberries or something. She swiped her finger through it then popped it into her mouth.

She froze as her tastebuds begged for something different. It wasn't sweet at all nor was it tangy. It tasted like she had just put a bar of soap in her mouth. She wanted to spit it out and flush her mouth with some water but she didn't want to be rude, especially at her first First Meal. She hesitantly swallowed the pungent, now melted, goop and reached for her water. She swished it around in her mouth but it wasn't strong enough. She grabbed the c'nlip and repeated her washing process.

The strong cider like alcohol did the trick and Erie looked down at the blue goop with disgust. "I don't like this one." She said to Dae'er, swallowing the contents of her mouth.

He let out a laugh as he scooped the goop off her plate and plopped it onto his. He was crazy for eating something so gross. She felt like it should be used to scrub the floor and not to be digested. Dae'er placed more meat on her plate and when another bowl of yellow goop came around, she promptly declined his offer to put it on her plate. She had enough blobs of the rainbow to last her a lifetime.

Finally, her favorite part of any meal came, dessert. She recognized the Twinkie looking cakes and her mouth watered at the mere sight of them. Her and Dae'er were served first, of course, and this was one thing that immediately became her favorite part about being his mate. The servant placed one then two on her plate, Dae'er grunted and the servant gave her two more. She smiled a wide cheesy grin at him and went to work on the cakes.

They were warm! She hadn't had them warm yet and she liked them much better this way. The scorching mixed berry flavored filling flooded onto her tongue, burning it in the process, but she didn't care. She moaned in delight as she took another bite of the hot dessert. She noticed the guy across from her was staring at her and she quickly lowered her shoulders and ate her Twinkie more quietly.

When they were finished with the meal, everyone had to wait until they left to leave themselves. Even though it was kind of ridiculous, it did make her feel special.

"What are we doing today?" She asked as she held onto Dae'er's hand.

"Whatever pleases you." He answered and Erie mulled over her ideas.

She wanted to explore this enormous building but she also wanted to go outside. She was curious as to what Dae'er did with his time when she wasn't with him. She also wanted to meet his brother that Seleana had told her so much about. Apparently he wasn't anything like Dae'er and he was no where near where Dae'er was with ranking but Seleana had spoke of him so often that she was curious to put a face to the description.

"What's your brother's name?" She asked.

He growled a little. "With luck you will never have to meet him." He replied.

"Is he worse than your father?" Her question had his dreadlocks rising up in agitation.

“No, but he is similar. He is arrogant and stubborn. Paya’s hand must’ve been tired after saving him as often as she has.” Dae’er replied as he took her through an unfamiliar wing.

Paya. It was their equivalent to the human’s God. She had picked this up only from listening to conversations. Cetanu was the final warrior, like Death, and Paya was the creator of all. She found it fascinating how their beliefs were so similar to some of the humans on Earth.

They passed a room made of thick glass and along the back wall there were small openings that connected to what looked like escape pods. She stopped and looked inside the room. The pod looked big enough to fit two of her inside but someone of Dae’er’s size would never fit comfortably so they couldn’t be escape pods.

“What are these for?” She asked gesturing into the room.

“Transporting items and equipment to game preserves or chiva grounds. Not important.” Dae’er said as he continued on past them.

The halls looked like something out of Star Trek. Black metal on the floors and ceilings with red lights that glowed just enough to make out silhouettes. She figured bright lights weren’t needed since the Yautja have thermal vision. Too much bright light would probably hurt their eyes. He came to a set of double sliding doors and he held his wrist computer up to a panel. It beeped a few times then chimed and the doors opened.

She was momentarily blinded by sunlight as it flooded out of the doors. It was a huge atrium with floor to ceiling trees and plants. Flowers blanketed the ground and cut grass made up the pathway. If it weren’t for the obvious glass ceiling, she would’ve thought they were outside. She walked out slowly examining the flora nearby. Giant green leaves that could be used like a throw blanket drooped down over the walkway and Erie ran her hands over their shiny looking surfaces.

There were different kinds of flowers with petals and stems she had never seen before. A red and white tulip looking flower had a twisted vine that weaved through a lattice decoration, creating a webbing that looked like it was made with candy canes. A huge emerald green bush, way bigger than she was, had basketball sized, hot pink star bursting flowers sprinkled all over it. Her favorite ones, though, had to be the white little heart shaped flowers that seemed to be everywhere. Used as some sort of filler for empty space.

She had been so consumed by the alien flowers and plants that she forgot Dae’er was waiting for her up ahead. She jogged over and smiled at him.

“This place is amazing! Why didn’t you bring me here before?” She exclaimed as he followed the path while she kept looking at the new surroundings.

“This place is only for members of my clan.” He placed his burly hand around her shoulder and pulled her into his side.

The sound of a slight waterfall could be heard from up ahead and Erie pulled away to go up and look. A huge crystal clear pond with a waterfall that cascaded down large rocks was right in the center of the atrium. Multiple grassy paths lead out into the maze of jungle from every direction.

Erie leaned over the bank and saw koi swimming around near where she was, hoping she'd drop food in. "You have fish from Earth in here." She stated as she dipped her finger in and pulled it out fast when they went to nibble at it.

"Earth has fish from Yautja Prime. Your kind seemed to value flora and fauna over currency when they were young. We often traded plants and animals for building our chiva grounds in their territories." He said as he squatted down and watched the fish with her.

"You could just take people but instead you traded with them?" She asked as she took off her bio mask and slid it into a pocket on her skirt.

"Didn't want to take them. We needed oomans to be willing to become sacrifices for the chivas." Erie watched as Dae'er placed his hand into the pond and when a koi swam through his fingers and he grasped it.

"Did they know what you were doing?" She asked.

"To an extent. They believed we were Gods, sent to flourish their lands with new animals and plants." He let the fish go and tried to catch another.

She watched him for a while and when he grew tired of catching them he turned his attention to her. His eyes trailed up her legs and over her stomach. She chuckled at his obvious gawking and he looked up at her.

"Why are you staring at me?" She asked flirtatiously.

He purred at her. "You are beautiful." He replied with that sultry and deep seductive voice of his.

She blushed and looked away from him. "You don't think female Yautja are beautiful?" She questioned.

"Female Yautja are self centered. Yautja Prime revolves around them instead of the sun. They are here," He said as he held his hand low to the ground. "And you are here." He said as he held his hand up over his head, opening his palm towards the sunlight and moving it across the sky.

She smiled as she walked over and placed her hands on his shoulders then applied her weight so he had to lay back in the grass with her on top of him. She loved the feel of his firm muscles under her palms, the well defined ridges were incredibly sexy and the markings from his successful hunts were as equally as enticing. His skin was so different than hers but she no longer cared, it was his giant Yautja heart that mattered to her.

She leaned down and kissed along his unarmored pectoral, occasionally gently raking her teeth over his thick skin. She could feel his purring through her mouth and she turned her head and placed her ear against his chest. His warmth was like laying next to a roaring bonfire, so hot on her surface that it gave her goosebumps. One of his hands went to her hair and that wonderful sensation of his claws on her scalp had her eyes closing.

She opened them again and saw his other hand tucked under his head in a relaxed manner. She reached up and felt his massive bicep. He laid his arm out for her and she ran her fingers down his arm as far as she could reach then he flexed it as he curled it back up. She chuckled as she tried to squeeze it but it was solid as a rock, literally. A bowling ball sized rock.

She moved her hand over to his shoulder and the base of his neck. This was her favorite part of any male that was well defined. The lifted little hill that sloped down to the curvy shoulder and collarbone. Dae'er's was so incredibly characterized that it was stirring her up just touching the muscled area. She tucked her bottom lip under her front teeth as she trailed her fingertips down his neck to his collarbone.

He could always tell when she was turned on or even just slightly aroused. He somehow knew when to pursue her further and kindle the growing fire between her legs and when to build it up. It was one of the reasons she got so turned on so easily by him, just knowing he knew where to touch her and how had her craving for him.

He removed his bio mask then his hands moved to her waist and he pressed her girly parts against his stomach. She rocked against him and a jolt of pleasure shot through her entire body causing a soft moan to escape her lips. He pulled her hips forward and as she got closer to his face she got confused.

"What are you.." She began to ask until he positioned her thighs around his head.

Oh, that's what he's doing. She held herself up with her knees and she pulled the covering aside that was shielding her center away from what Dae'er wanted. His metal tipped tusks tickled against the inside of her legs as he spread them then he brought her core closer to his mouth and she let out an airy gasp as that hot wet tongue of his slid into her opening.

His tongue wasn't human like at all. It was much more smoother and came to a point but, goddamn, it was scorching hot and incredibly..fantastic. She felt his tongue flick through her folds and tease at her clit. He definitely knew his way around the female anatomy, that was for sure.

His tongue was causing her body to go crazy. Sometimes he'd hit the right spot and she would twitch and her thighs would quiver but then he'd have her relaxing and melting over top of him only to rile her up again. She didn't last very long as her thighs flexed and tried to close around the sides of his head. She opened her mouth and airy gasps fluttered from her throat. As it faded into the last remnants she let out a wonderful moan of satisfaction.

Well one thing's for certain, she's never done that before, not in that position anyway. She moved back and sat on his chest and she felt his hand remove his codpiece. She went to turn around to look at it when he lifted her up by her hips and set her down below his thick hard erection. This was the first time she was seeing it. All the other times she was only feeling it.

It came up way above her bellybutton and was as thick as her arm. How did he even get that inside of her? It looked almost the same as an uncut human male except for the color and size. She reached down and pulled back the light green skin to reveal a ton of ridges down both sides of his shaft and a tight thick head. She took her other hand and carefully ran her fingers over the raised areas. He let out a guttural growl but it wasn't an angry one, it was more seductive.

So these were there to increase his pleasure, not hers. That was interesting. She wondered if they did both if he was with a female Yautja. He had a massive scrotum that was covered in the thinnest skin she had seen so far on his body. By the look of those gonads, it was no wonder he came so much the last time they were together.

She wanted to return the favor he just gave her but she wasn't sure she could even fit him into her mouth. She figured she could at least try. She slid her body between his legs and he raised up to see what she was doing to him. She went to place his head into her mouth and he jumped.

"No'elia." He said. His face looked unsure and she realized that Yautja females probably never pleased males this way. How could they? They had no lips.

She smiled at him deviously and when she went to glide that smooth round head into her mouth his hand shot to the one that was gripping his shaft and still holding his skin back. He acted like she was going to eat him or something. She ignored his attempts to stop her and kissed the slit that was glistening with pre-cum. That indulging woodsy smell flooded the air and she recognized it as his claiming scent.

She wrapped her lips around him and sucked the moisture off then she pressed the tip of her tongue into his slit and found the slight saltiness favorable. She moved her hand down his shaft, stroking the thick and vast muscle while she kissed and sucked along the ridges causing a loud reverberating purr from his throat. She had never heard him make that sound before and she wanted to hear him do it again. She licked up every ridge and his hand tightened around her wrist.

It was painful but the pleasure she was giving him was well worth it. She sucked his head into her mouth as much as she could and she glided it up and down rhythmically. She barely got the ridge of his head in her mouth but he seemed to love it anyway. She allowed her saliva to cascade in trails down his length and she used her free hand to coat it over his skin.

His hand moved to her hair and he gathered it to one side, slightly pulling it with every jolt of pleasure he felt from her. She moaned around his head in her mouth as she looked up from her position across his sexy muscular body to see his mandibles clenched tightly together. His fiery red eyes were lit up like two burning embers and were focused directly up at the sky, clearly lost in what she was doing to him.

For the first time since she'd been here, she felt in control. She was the one who was in charge of him and how he was pleased. She worked her hands and her mouth together, twisting her hands gently around and up and down his shaft while her tongue thrummed against the bottom of his head and along the couple of ridges.

She managed to fit about another inch of him into her mouth, shoving his head into her throat. His hand wrung her hair harder, pulling it tightly against their roots. She moaned from her throat at his attempt to regain the control she had such a hold on. She loved being the one with all the authority but she also loved being dominated even more and his enormous size and strength did just that.

She felt him shove himself further into her throat and she gagged a little but quickly controlled it when she felt his molten hot seed spilling down her throat. She looked up and saw his mandibles splayed open and he was growling loudly while his muscles tensed and flexed. His erection was pulsating in her mouth while he still emptied himself. She swallowed every bit of what he was giving her and when he finally finished, she sucked on his head, milking every drop from his slit.

His hand loosened in her hair and she slid him from her throat. His erection was still rock hard but the color had changed. It went from glowing bright green to a darker more duller one. He played with the ends of her hair, twirling them around his claws.

“No’elia.” He purred out and she smiled up at him and wiped away the saliva from her chin and the corners of her mouth.

He motioned for her to come closer to him and she crawled up his body until she reached his chest. He ran his hand along the curvature of her spine then he gripped her butt in his huge palm.

“An ooman ritual?” He questioned her.

“Just returning the favor.” She whispered as she kissed him on his mandible.

The sound of a door opening somewhere in the atrium had him grabbing his codpiece and securing it into place. He winced when he had to shove his erection into the confined space. Erie giggled when she saw it bulging out slightly.

“Sire?” Dae’er’s servant appeared at one of the paths and after a moment he continued to walk closer to them.

He stopped abruptly and his forehead wrinkled. He could obviously smell Dae’er’s musk still heavy in the air. The male bowed immediately and backed away.

“Forgive me.” He said sincerely.

Dae’er grunted, signaling for the servant to continue.

“Your plans... for the revelry.” He stated.

Erie looked up at Dae’er and he kept his eyes on his servant. “I’ve decided to wait until she has completed my sire’s stipulation.” He answered.

“Very well.” The servant said as he bowed out and promptly exited the atrium.

Erie waited until the door was closed then questioned Dae’er. “What revelry? The one you wanted for me?”

“Sei-i. I’ve decided to wait and throw an even grander one when you finish your kv’var on the game preserve.” He replied as he stood and headed for a different path out of the atrium.

“What if I can’t do it? What if I, I don’t know, die?” She asked as she stood and followed him.

He stopped and turned to her abruptly. “You won’t, do you understand me? You will succeed and you will show to the rest of Yautja Prime that you are worthy of being my mate and their ju’ha.” He turned and headed back in the direction he was going.

“Ju’ha? Why does that sound familiar?” She asked as she thought about the word. “Oh yeah, the Ancient during our mating ceremony referred to me as that. What does it mean?” She inquired.

“Princess.” Dae’er replied as he kept up his stride.

“Whoa, whoa whoa wait.” She said as she wrapped her hands around his forearm. He turned and looked down at her. “A princess? I can’t be a princess, I’m not princess material.” She argued.

“I may not be First Born but I am still a Prince and you are my mate. Legally and officially, making you my ju’ha and you are more than worthy. More worthy than any other female.” He said as he turned and continued out of the atrium, leading her down more hallways.

Her? An alien princess? She gripped her new pendant in her palm, causing the sharp edges to embed into her skin. She couldn’t be a princess, she had no idea how to act like one. At least Dae’er wasn’t the First Born and she wouldn’t end up being queen one day. Still.. royalty? Dae’er tucked her into his side and she laid against him.

“When do we start training?” She questioned.

“Tomorrow, if your new awu’asa is ready.” He said as he let go of her to check his wrist computer.

She was nervous about going to the game preserve and she remembered the king’s words clearly. If she failed, she’d no longer be able to be with Dae’er and she’d bring dishonor to his reputation. How that works she wasn’t even sure but if the king announced it, then everyone would surely follow it. She couldn’t allow him to be disgraced because of her and she definitely couldn’t lose him.

She looked up at his massive form as he strode through the halls like he owned everything and everyone. She had to push herself to be stronger, stuff her brain with every piece of knowledge Dae’er had and then some. She had to succeed, she had to show everyone that she could do it and that she deserved Dae’er more than anyone else. Most of all, she had to show herself that she was worthy of everything Dae’er had taught her.

It was going to be a long six months, but she was ready. Ready to get it done and over with so she could finally enjoy her new life with Dae’er uninterrupted. She could do this, she could fulfill what everyone was probably doubting she could. She’ll be a ju’ha to be reckoned with after it’s all said and done, just wait and see.

Chapter 15

Hello! I'm sorry on the late update but I've been preoccupied with another story. Don't fret, I have not abandoned this one, it's just, as I stated in a previous chapter, I absolutely *loathe* editing. I've mustered up the courage to tackle this chapter though and I hope it's not too disappointing. I hope everyone had a lovely holiday season and the best New Year so far! Perhaps I should've made my resolution: To spend more time editing than writing! LOL.

To my new followers and favorites: Thank you soooo much! I LOVE getting new friends and hopefully I'm keeping everyone well entertained with my writing.

To those who reviewed: I also enjoyed every review and it truly makes my day to see such kind words from everyone. You are all greatly appreciated and are my main motivation to keep on posting and editing. I was so nervous when I first posted something for the entire world to see and it's so reassuring to see such positive comments. You all make my day ten times brighter! So thank you!

Disclaimer: I do not own Predator or any character pertaining to the Predator, AvP, or Alien franchise!

Thank you for choosing Devotion!

Dae'er woke No'elia up early and she stood sleepily in front of him, wiping her eyes repeatedly. He would've woke her when he received her awu'asa three hours ago but she seemed so peaceful while she slept. She was already without clothes so he retrieved her new awu'asa and slipped the top covering on over her head and she mumbled wearily from the interaction. He stepped back and examined her.

The awu'asa was long sleeve, like she requested, and like her awu'asa before, it was made out of the tough and acid proof material his netting was made of. The material was skin tight and the sleeves came down and covered half of her hand and had a hole for her thumb. He figured since she was going to have long sleeves, she no longer needed gloves so he had them built in. The hem still left her stomach revealed and the back laced up to show her markings.

She wanted full coverings on her legs but her markings had to be visible at all times so he had a set of netting made specifically for her legs. He helped her put them on then he slid her skirt over them.

Next, he slid on her wrist blades and her wrist gauntlet followed by her leg guards and her daggers. He then fastened a new sheath onto her back, the straps wrapped over her chest, above her breasts, and another went under them and secured with a buckle. He finally set a black metal pauldron on her left shoulder. It had a small piece that came up to give her neck more protection from the left side and it had ridges overlapping one another down the top part of her shoulder. He had the metal engraved with the symbol for no'eli and the one for the royal bloodline, as well as other intricate engravings and designs.

He stepped back and took another look at her. She looked much more protected and he was immensely satisfied with all of the new awu'asa especially the new pauldron. He reached over and lifted a custom made sivk'va-tai off the rack, designed to fit her small ooman hands. She watched as he slid the small gun into the sheath on her back with the end of the weapon tilted towards her right side.

"No'elia, reach for it." He instructed her.

She reached up and her hand wrapped around the section where the butt meets the firing chamber and he trilled in delight. It was the perfect size and at the right height for her to grab. She yawned sleepily and he grunted.

"So tired." She whispered.

"We must train. Six seasons isn't very long for what you need to learn. Blooded sain'ja usually wait two years at least before trying their hand at the game preserve. You have six seasons to learn what they do in two years." He pointed out.

She shifted uncomfortably and he walked over and pressed her into his body. "Come, No'elia, let's get started."

He led her into the kehrite and brought up three holographic images: a River Ghost, an ooman and a Bad Blood. She looked at the River Ghost the longest.

"This is what I'll be hunting?" She asked as she looked over at the other two.

"Sei-i. River Ghosts, Bad Bloods and oomans. These aren't civilians like at the chiva grounds, these are sain'ja on their planets. Trained to know when they are being hunted and how to deal with life threatening situations. They aren't predictable like the kainde amedha. They are extremely dhi'rauta, No'elia, and they will kill you." Dae'er said grimly to make his point and No'elia looked at him nervously.

"We'll start with the oomans." He said as he turned off the other two and summoned in five more different looking ooman sain'jas.

No'elia looked at them all, sizing them up, examining them and taking in everything. "I recognize these types of sain'jas." She said. "These are soldiers in the military." Her eyebrow arched at the other two. "America's most wanted and Mr. Myagi? These are the types of people I will be hunting?" She asked in slight disbelief.

"All of the sain'jas will be hand selected by a group of Yautja who specialize in finding suitable prey. They will be best in their class and top of the line. You will need to remain on guard at all times." Dae'er said as he activated the oomans and their deknas shifted to No'elia.

"You want me to *kill* them?" She asked.

"They are no longer your kind. They are your prey. I am your kind, my people are your people. They are a threat to you and won't hesitate to kill you so what do you need to do first, No'elia?" He asked as he circled around the oomans and No'elia along the edge of the kehrite.

"I need to kill them first." She mumbled slowly.

“Sei-i.” He summoned four of them away leaving one of the soldiers. “Begin.” He said as he activated the ooman.

The ooman soldier fired off his weapon at No’elia and she swiftly ran around him, avoiding his shots. She flanked him from the back and unsheathed her dagger and quickly drove it into his right shoulder. The ooman’s shoulder dropped from his severed tendons and he dropped the taun’dcha to the floor. No’elia was so fast even Dae’er had trouble keeping up with her without his bio mask. She had sliced through his calves, bringing the ooman to his knees then she stopped in front of him and extended her dah’kte.

He watched as she hesitated. Her body looked like it was ready to strike but he could sense her uncertainty all the way over here. The hologram ooman was afraid of her and was no longer a threat but the purpose of this was for her to gather the courage to deal a fatal blow to the ooman. Dae’er stepped forward.

“If he was real, he would be rendered useless. You have paralyzed him. His life is essentially over, No’elia, why allow him to suffer?” Her face winced but it was obvious she agreed with him.

She quickly drove her dah’kte through his chest, the sound of the blades breaking through bone echoed in the room. After the ooman hologram disappeared, No’elia dropped to one knee.

“I don’t know if I can do this.” She said as her voice cracked. ‘I don’t want to lose you or dishonor you but *killing* oomans? It goes against everything I’ve worked my whole life for. Killing people is just..’ She swallowed hard. “Wrong.”

Dae’er began to feel frustrated with her. He hadn’t gotten upset with her in a long time as his role as her male made him want to please her and protect her but her strong compassionate heart was definitely going to get her killed. He summoned another ooman and increased its aggression. If she couldn’t get past her inability to execute, it would be the end of both of their lives.

“No’elia.” He said as the ooman rushed over to her and threw a punch right into her left cheek.

She didn’t even attempt to block or dodge it. She grunted and fell to the floor and the ooman picked her up by her chest awu’asa and struck her again. The smell of her thwei filled his senses and had all of his sensories firing off at once, begging him to defend her but she needed to learn. The ooman hologram struck her again and again and she still had no reaction as her face became unidentifiable from her thwei.

“Fight, No’elia. You would allow yourself to be beaten to death than ignore your humanity and defend your life?” He growled out as the ooman drew back his fist and hit her right in the mouth, splattering red thwei across the kehrite floor.

“I can’t.” She sobbed out through a mouth full of blood that spilled out and trickled over her lips.

“Fight!” He snarled.

She whimpered as the ooman let her limp body drop to the floor. “I won’t kill people.” She cried then she screamed it. “I won’t kill people!”

“Then you will die! My sire will force me to kill you with my own blade! You must fight for you and you must fight for me!” His voice was so loud that it echoed off the walls.

The ooman crouched down and ripped off No’elia’s bio mask to reveal her thwei shot deknas streaming with tears. He tossed it across the room then gave her a hard head butt. She was still conscious but she wasn’t moving. Why wasn’t she fighting? What was wrong with her? He had never seen her so unwilling to do anything especially during training.

Dae’er strode over while extending his dah’kte and with one swing, removed the ooman’s head. He squatted down and brushed back her thwei matted mane from her face. She looked up at him and a tear ran down her cheek as her lip quivered.

“Why won’t you fight?” He questioned her with a softer tone.

“It’s not the fighting, I don’t care to fight.” She winced out. “I won’t kill.”

“Then I can no longer be with you.” He said as he wiped away some of her thwei from her mouth with his thumb.

“Can’t I just capture them?” She asked wearily.

“H-ko. Their purpose is to provide you with challenge. Capturing isn’t challenging, it does not eliminate their threat. Do you not understand, No’elia? These aren’t civilians! They are cold blooded sain’ja!” He stood from her wounded body and paced back and forth.

He couldn’t believe how stubborn she was being. She didn’t care if she lived and it seemed she didn’t care if she lost him forever. Had he not proven himself worthy of her yet? Was her lack of feelings or care of losing him his fault? He felt like he had been a good male towards her. Fed her, clothed her, mated her when she urged him to and even bestowed his knowledge upon her, was it not enough to gain her favor? Perhaps she needed more proof of his devotion to her.

She was sitting up now and was still woozy from her beating. He walked over to her and kneeled down in front of her. He took her face into his hands and bowed his head against hers, nuzzling her soft skin and purring to comfort her.

“I would do anything for you.” He said as he took his bio mask from his belt and secured it on his face then he retrieved his ki’cti-pa. “My devotion to you is as strong as your compassion for your own kind and I’d do anything to prove it to you, my ju’ha.” He extended his ki’cti-pa and summoned a dozen Yautja and set them to aggressive and to focus on her.

They were all equipped with weapons and awu’asa from the top of the line. They shifted in eagerness, ready to kill No’elia. Dae’er moved his ki’cti-pa into a defensive position then he shifted his stance into a firm one. They charged and his ears twitched when he felt No’elia scramble away in h’dlak. He was quick and precise as he blocked and parried, jabbed and sliced. He summoned more and more of his own kind and one by one he brought them down.

It felt like it wasn’t enough so he summoned more and more. He summoned River Ghosts and kainde amedha. He brought out everything in his arsenal except oomans and he slaughtered all of it in her name. He had to show her that he was worth her reverence, that he could protect her in her time of need and provide her with his strength when she felt she was weak. It was his job as her male to use every last ounce of his being to prove he was devoted and that his life belonged to her.

He was showing her that he could easily kill his own kind for her. He would defend her to his last breath and he didn't care who he had to take down to protect her. A hundred of his kind, a thousand kainde amedha, ten thousand River Ghosts, he would conquer them all to show her that he was worthy to be her male.

He had killed about ten dozen enemies when he realized No'elia was begging him to stop. He immediately dismissed all of them and turned to No'elia. His chest rose and fell rapidly from exertion. She wrapped her small arms around his leg and hugged him tightly.

"Have I proved my devotion to you?" He asked in Yautja.

"Sei-i." She wept.

"I'd slaughter hundreds of thousands of beings for you, No'elia." He said as he squatted down and wrapped his arms around her to chi'ytei her. 'If I could, I'd take your place in a heartbeat but my kind needs proof that those who will lead them are worthy of doing so. They will look to you for guidance and protection, like they do me.' He stroked her thwei covered dark strands then stood and retrieved her bio mask. "Will you fight for me and prove that you are a worthy ju'ha, No'elia?" He asked as he placed it into her hand, closing her fist around it.

She opened her hand and looked at the mask a moment then she secured it in place. Her mi flower had already gone to work on her bruises and they were lightening in color right before his deknas. She stood and unsheathed her daggers, holding them at the ready.

"Sei-i. I've defied the odds this far, why stop now?" The deknas of her bio mask lit up red as she activated it.

He extended his chest and broadened his shoulders. This was his lou-dte kale. This was the No'elia he had fallen for. The confidence he had grown so fond of was once again shining through. She was a sain'ja, his sain'ja, and at the six seasons mark, she will prove to his kind that she is more than just an ooman, that she is indeed, a Yautja.

They were three seasons away from No'elia's mission. He had decided to break the time down into parts, two months on each possible prey she would encounter and on the days she needed a break from physical training, he would show her weapons and traps. The Bad Bloods would be stripped of their weapons and awu'asa but that didn't make them any less of a threat. They've been off the charts for who knows how long and with nothing but time on their hands, they always used it to train. There was no telling how strong they were.

He had to show No'elia how to spar with a ravenous Yautja and how to dismantle River Ghost traps and ooman traps, on top of teaching her how to handle each prey. This was near impossible but No'elia was determined and so was he.

She was busy trying to match the flora that was native to the planet, figuring out which ones were fatal. They hadn't mated in a long time, not since before her training started and it was because she was usually exhausted at the end of the long day. He was finding it difficult to focus and everything she did seemed to trigger his male instincts. Even now, her focused and serious demeanor had his malehood growing.

She missed one and slammed her tiny fist against the arm of the couch. “Ugh, this is bullc’jit! I know that’s a Raptor plant. Look at it.” She said angrily as she turned her wrist gauntlet hologram to show him a jagged green leaf spinning slowly in a circle. “That belongs to a Raptor plant, doesn’t it?” It didn’t. The program wasn’t wrong but No’elia was so flustered with it and she had been studying for hours, he didn’t want to see her so upset over something so trivial.

He chuffed. “How about a break?”

“No, I’m already on a break.” She said as she went back to completing the test.

He reached over and closed her wrist gauntlet. “A break from the break then.”

“You want to go for a walk?” She asked.

“H-ko.” He answered as he removed his bio mask and codpiece and dropped them to the floor.

“Grab a snack?” She offered as she looked at him suspiciously and tried to hide a grin.

“H-ko.” He replied as he advanced closer to her on the couch.

“There’s not too much more to do. Maybe you could take me to the market or whatever it is you shop from. That could be relaxing.” She said as she began to climb up on the arm of the couch trying to get further from him, obviously aware of what he had in mind.

“Perhaps after.” He stated as he leaned closer to her deviously.

“After what? A snack? A stroll?” She fought back a smile as she continued with her oblivious act.

He reached for her and she bolted up and over the wooden table beside the arm of the couch, just like a no’eli would. So she wanted to play hunter and the prey. He decided to entertain her little antic and moved quickly off the couch after her.

She giggled as she went through his trophy hall, glancing back to see how close he was closing in on her. She was quick, but he still barely had the upper hand when it came to speed. Just when he thought he had cornered her at the end of the hall, she bounced off the wall and moved around him. He tried to grab at her but missed completely. Pauk, perhaps he was wrong about having the upper hand.

He turned and chased her back down the hall where she circled around the couch, all while laughing and giggling at his failed attempts to catch her. She went for the exit and he quickly locked the door with his gauntlet, leaving her trapped and stunned just long enough to surround her.

She pressed herself against the door and when he was almost close enough to reach for her she darted under his arm. Like always, he was impressed by her rapid speed. He couldn’t even touch her when he reached for her. His claws brushed along her back but he couldn’t get a grip on her.

He pivoted and saw her grinning ear to ear and she was crouched slightly in preparation to dash away from him again. He let out a soft low growl signaling that he was finished playing

her little game. He bent his knees and copied her stance. She retrieved her dagger from her thigh but kept her deknas on him.

“You still think you can land a blow, ju’ha?” He trilled.

“Sei-i.” She replied.

He used his claws to gesture for her to come at him and she reacted fast. She charged at him and he prepared to grab her before she could even get close but she instantly dropped to her knees. She slid between his legs and used her weapon to cut away a strap of his loin cloth as she went through. Kwei little female. He turned quickly, his tresses spinning as he did, but he was slow and No’elia was far too quick. She buzzed by him again, cutting at the last strap of leather that held his loin cloth in place.

He stood there staring at his female as she smirked at him in victory. His loin cloth fell to the floor leaving his half erect malehood visible. She raised her eyebrows and tucked that soft pink lower lip under her teeth, a gesture he had grown quite fond of.

“Did that count as a blow?” She teased.

“H-ko.” He replied and she let out a melodic sounding laugh that made his ears perk up.

He moved quickly while she was distracted and pressed her against the wall, pinning the wrist she was holding the weapon in. She gasped and looked at him in surprise but it didn’t last long. She flashed him a sexy stare and he watched the warmth in her body flood to her center, a clear indication she was aroused. He purred when the sweet h’dui’sse had his member throbbing between her small thighs.

His dai-shui was also flooding the aroma and mixing together with hers. Her small ooman mouth parted and she let out an alluring gasp. He squeezed her wrist, causing her to drop her weapon then he picked her up and carried her to the bed. He laid on his back with her legs wrapped around him and her small cool hands went to work over his chest.

She unlatched all of his awu’asa and discarded it to the floor then she bowed her head and pressed her soft moist lips over his blazing hot skin. She lifted his hand and placed his middle claw into her warm mouth and wrapped her tongue around it before sucking on it as she pulled it out. He had grown quite fond of her ooman mating techniques, the things she could do with that small mouth was amazing.

She raised up on her knees but it wasn’t high enough so he lifted her up a little more and she guided his malehood into her tight and slick opening beneath her skirt covering. She slid down his length in a firm hold of warmth and wetness. His claws squeezed her hips at the sensation and he growled deep in his chest. He watched her stop when his tip collided with the end of her canal. She sucked in airy gasps and her knees tucked against his hips.

He purred to ease her and she closed her deknas in response. He had never laid with a female in this position before. He was always the one who had to mount and provide the pleasure. It was interesting to see how this way worked.

She had settled further down on top of him and had began to rock her hips back and forth slowly. Her slow motions weren’t doing much for him but he enjoyed watching her body move and work. Her abdominal muscles flexed and she would push her breasts out with each tilt of her body.

He reached up and ran his claw down her midsection, stopping to run his finger along her slit. She moaned at his touch and raised up, revealing his thick hard malehood connected with her opening. The sight had his male instincts screaming at him to flip her over and pauk her until she laid tired and limp beneath him but he fought it. He wanted to see more of No'elia in this new and intriguing position.

Her slick walls increased in wetness and she buried his member deep within her, pressing herself against him. She moaned and arched her back, causing him to be pressed against her inner wall. She leaned back placing her palms on his thighs and used those seductive hips of hers to slide up and down his length.

Paya, this was even better than the normal way they mated. Watching her take what she wanted from him was incredible. That was the exact purpose of his role, to give her everything and need nothing in return.

She leaned forward, pressing those small hands into his abdominal muscles then bounced her hips up and down his malehood. She would go fast then slow then she would raise up and grind herself against him.

She continued to pleasure herself until she sat upright and arched her back. Her thighs clenched his hips and her tight walls squeezed his shaft, milking him over and over again. His name escaped her lips in a whisper and when he felt her relax, he raised up and turned her onto her hands and knees.

He pulled her hips against him as close as he could then he slammed into her slickness, thrusting hard and fast. He reached up and gripped the nape of her neck with one hand and used the other to clamp onto her hip. He snarled and grit his fangs together as he buried himself deep into her warmth.

"Pauk.." She stuttered out as her legs quivered against his and her walls squeezed him once more.

It had been so long since he had felt her around him so it didn't take much before he reached his own release. He roared as his seed spilled violently inside of her, filling her to the brim like before. It oozed out around his member, running down her slit and dripping onto the furs.

When his release finally began to fade, he leaned over her, pressing her back against his chest. Her small ooman heart was beating rapidly and he enjoyed the light fluttering against his skin. He trailed his claws down over her breasts and stomach then he lowered his head, letting his tresses glide over her shoulders.

He bathed her in his scent, soaked her in it and making sure it was evident in her dark mane as well. He laid her gently onto the white furs, removed himself from her center and admired her markings and the curvature of her tanned body.

"Still want to go for a stroll?" He questioned her.

She mumbled something and he took that as a h-ko. He went over and retrieved a new loincloth, not even bothering to clean No'elia off his malehood. He replaced his awu'asa and trilled at her light snoring. He secured his bio mask and exited his abode, leaving No'elia to

rest. He figured he'd stop and get a snack before returning and getting her to repeat that wonderful position all over again.

As he made his way towards the end of his wing, the familiar sound of his mei'hswei's voice perked up his ears. He rounded a corner and Talia saw him first as she hung off his brother's arm like a prize. She flicked her tusks at him, a signal that she still favored him. He ignored her blatant disrespect for his older mei'hswei and chuffed to get his attention.

"Ah, Dae'er. So where is she?" Jae'dar asked, clearly looking for No'elia. "Where is my new mei-jahdi?"

"Sei-i where is *our* new mei-jahdi." Talia added.

Jae'dar's tresses raised and he trilled. "Tired, I'm guessing." He said as he reached out and placed his claw on Dae'er's shoulder then shook it, speaking of his sudden whiff of his recent mating with No'elia.

"Sei-i. Tired." He replied, ignoring Talia's deknas as they trailed up and down his body in jealousy.

"I heard about father's proclamation for your female and after much aggravation, he's agreed to allow me to use my own companion in the upcoming season." Jae'dar shoved forward No'elia's ooman friend from the companion station, Seleana, if he recalled correctly.

Dae'er eyed the puny ooman. Jae'dar obviously hadn't trained the female at all and she looked up at Dae'er with h'dlak stricken features. She had been crying for a long time it looked like and her arms were covered in bruises. Dae'er was glad No'elia was asleep so she didn't have to see what he was seeing right now or he'd have an irate mate on his hands.

"She has no training." Dae'er stated.

"And your female does?" Jae'dar said as his hand glided over Seleana's chest and cupped her breast.

"She is a Blooded sain'ja, of course she has training. You think I am a *fool*, Jae'dar? You think I'd just send my mate to her death on purpose?" He barked angrily, upset that Jae'dar would use No'elia's friend like he was.

Jae'dar removed his hand from Seleana and stiffened his shoulders. "If you're questioning whether or not I believe your ignorance is greater than any Yautja I've encountered, then sei-i. Sei-i a thousand times." Jae'dar glared at Dae'er, ready to accept the challenge that he was preparing to throw out.

"You can't send this ooman to the game preserve. It will be her death." Dae'er said more calmly as he reached out for Seleana.

Talia wrapped her gold talon covers round his wrist and shoved his hand away. "Don't touch her! She's *mine*." She growled, pushing Seleana against her side.

Jae'dar was cackling at the situation. "My mei'hswei and his weakness for the pyode amedha. How quaint." He pulled Seleana from Talia and pressed her into his body as his hands perused her bare skin again. 'I can understand why you favor them so much. Their tight little ooman sheaths are quite a change from a Yautja females.' He slid his claw beneath

Seleana's bottom covering and she winced then he pulled out his hand and licked up his middle claw. "They taste pretty good too."

Dae'er was glowing with rage as he turned his attention to Talia. "Do you think this is what your sire had in mind when he left her to you? Allowing my brute of a mei'hswei to force himself on her and then force her to her death?" He barked at Talia.

"It was her idea. All of it. I was hesitant as I despise them as much as father does but I was also interested in seeing why my baby mei'hswei cherished them so much." Jae'dar said as Talia looked up Dae'er's body with a malicious grin.

This female Yautja was walking a fine line with him. He could easily wring her twisted little neck with his claws if it weren't for his mei'hswei. She obviously had a hold on his older sibling, her claws deep in his skin like a blade, wrenching it hard. His brother would never do anything so dishonorable to any creature, even an ooman. He also never allowed himself to be controlled either. Talia had sunk to a new low and she was dragging his brother with her.

With his deknas firmly on Talia he spoke to his brother. "You've allowed this wench to hook her claws into you and you don't even realize it. If you don't tread lightly, she'll have everyone convinced you've become dishonorable." He warned.

Jae'dar's face shifted from sly to angry in one swift go. "No one controls me! *I control her!*" Jae'dar snapped.

Dae'er didn't reply as he shot Jae'dar a look of disbelief then he turned on his heel and thundered back down his wing. He wanted to get No'elia something sweet to eat but he had forgotten until he entered into his dwellings. No'elia was curled up under a fur fast asleep. He couldn't even imagine how she will react to the news of her friend being tossed to the wolves like she was. The whole thing seemed like a ploy to destroy what him and No'elia had been working so hard for.

His father only agreed to Seleana going to the game preserve just to watch Dae'er writhe, he just knew it. No'elia would definitely want to protect her friend at the game preserve and that would increase her chances of being caught herself. No'elia would never live with herself knowing her friend was out there alone, nor would she listen to him about abandoning her.

The situation definitely drove a knife through their plan. He sat down on the bed and gently stroked her dark mane. Dae'er was frustrated not being able to help her. He couldn't stop her being forced to go to the game preserve, he couldn't prevent her friend from being sent as well and he certainly couldn't stop his sire from trying to drive his sword right through their bond.

He felt helpless as her mate and as her male. It was his job to protect her but how could he protect her from this? No'elia rolled onto her back and the pendant he gave her laid against her neck as she moved. Pauk. There had to be something he could do. Something to allow him to fulfill his role without disobeying his father's proclamation.

There was only one situation that would prevent No'elia from going anywhere. It was an unlikely one but he had to at least look into it. He stood and after watching No'elia for a moment, he exited his dwellings and headed for the infirmary. He knew who to go to and he had all of his questions prepared, he just hoped they had all the right answers.

Uh oh, what's Dae'er up to? Let's hope it's nothing terrible :D

Ooman: Human

Kv'var: Hunt

Kainde Amedha: Hard meats, Xenomorphs, or what we know as the creatures from Alien.

Pyode Amedha: Soft Meats, humans.

Dah-kte: Wrist Blades

Awu'asa: Armor

Dekna(s): Eye/Eyes

H'dlak: Fear

No'eli: Cat/Feline

Thwei: Blood

Kehrite: Training room, gym

River Ghosts: Hostile insect like humanoids with a hard exoskeleton covering on their body. They are much faster, more agile and much more powerful than humans.

Dai-shui: Yautja Musk

Pauk: Fuck

C'jit: Shit

H'dui'se: Scent

Mei'hswei(s): Brother(s), also used as a term Yautja call other members of their clan.

Ki-cti-pa: Combi-stick

Sain'ja: Warrior

H'ko: No

Sei-i: Yes

Ju'ha: Princess

Chi'ytei: Embrace/Hug

Lou-dte kale: Child-maker (female)mei-jahdi: Sister

Dhi-rauta: Cunning

Sivk'va-tai: Plasma Caster

Taun'dcha: Gun/Pistol

Chapter 16

Sorry for such a long wait on the update but it's here now and that's what matters right?! I hope you find these two chapters adequate. I honestly was debating on these next three chapters and their content and whether or not I was satisfied with them but after a lot of consideration, they will have to do!

Thanks again for choosing Devotion!

DISCLAIMER I do not own Predator, Alien, or any characters pertaining to the AVP franchise!*

Dae'er had been quiet for the past week, hardly saying a word to her. Every now and then he'd sneak off while she was distracted with training and be gone for hours, not coming back until it was time to eat. She had asked him several times where he was going but he'd only say it was for royal duties. She doubted that, he never left to do his royal duties before and he certainly didn't sneak out to do it.

She stared at him from across the kehrite. His massive arms were crossed across his broad chest and he was leaning against the wall near the doorway. Probably waiting until she wasn't looking so he could sneak out again. It looked like he was watching her but she had a feeling he wasn't.

Normally when he observed her training, he'd be right up next to her, pointing out mistakes or praising her for doing a good job but he wasn't now, hadn't since he had startled slinking off. Something was up and she wanted to know what it was. As his mate, she at least deserved an explanation.

She stormed over to him and stood right up on him. He didn't budge as she looked up at him with an annoyed expression on her face. He wasn't even looking at her, the big jerk. She looked at him closely and heard a familiar sound coming from him. She leaned in closer and confirmed his light snoring.

He was asleep! Dead asleep standing up! She poked him with her finger in the ribs and he grunted but didn't wake up. Wow, he usually woke up from her just breathing loudly and now he wasn't even stirring from a poke? Maybe he was sick or something.

She shook him the best she could and he quickly extended his wrist blades and swiped at her. She moved away as he squared up, ready to kill whoever was disturbing his abnormal slumber. When his brain realized it wasn't asleep anymore, he retracted the blades and began to roll his shoulders from sleeping in the position he was just in.

"I apologize, No'elia, just a little tired." He said as he removed his bio mask and rubbed his temples with his thumb and finger.

"A little? You were dead asleep standing up and didn't even budge when I poked you. That's more than just a little tired." She replied as she watched him walk over and get a drink of water.

"You poked me?" He was focusing on the wrong part of the conversation, probably another tactic to not telling her what he was up to.

"That's not the point, you are hiding something from me and I want to know what it is." She stated firmly.

He wiped the excess water from his mouth and stared at Erie while holding the water container. "It's not of importance, not yet anyway." He replied.

"I don't care when it's important, now, tomorrow, in a week, that's also not the point. You've been sneaking off and not talking to me. You haven't even been flirting with me." She exclaimed as he approached her.

"You wish to be seduced by me?" He questioned as he went to put his hand up to caress her face but she slapped it away.

"H-ko! I want you to tell me what's going on with you! Stop trying to avoid it, it's not going to happen." She argued and he quickly deflated.

He took another big swig from the water container as Erie watched him like a hawk. Not important? It must be important enough if he needs to keep it so secret. If it were her being so aloof, he'd be a complete mess. He'd go absolutely crazy if she lacked in her attention towards him, so how dare he even try to push her away from the subject.

"Well?" She pushed.

"No'elia, it's not of importance.." He began but she blew up. She had had enough.

"Stop saying that! Stop treating me like what's happening to you doesn't matter to me because it does! If something is wrong or you're sick or something has changed with the stipulation your father has given us, I deserve to know. As your mate, I at least deserve to know why my male is torturing himself over whatever it is." She stated as she watched Dae'er's demeanor go from unmoved to crumbled.

He sighed and walked back over to the rack to set the water container down. He was deep in thought, contemplating her words. She decided not to bother him as he did so, giving him time to mull over whatever it was he was thinking about.

"No'elia." He said after a few minutes of silence and she perked up to hear what he had to say. "Do you recall your statement of carrying my pups?" He asked.

She frowned. Was this why he was upset? Because she couldn't get pregnant by him? She felt guilty all of a sudden. Guilty because she couldn't please him. She didn't blame him for being upset about her lack of not being able to give him a successor, she'd be bothered by it too. Her brain was going through a million thoughts right now. Did he plan on leaving her? Had he found someone else? Perhaps he was regretting everything they had done. Her heart was already beginning to ache and he hadn't even said anything yet. She tried to swallow down the enormous lump in her throat.

"Sei-i." She said dejectedly.

“If you could, would you still be willing to bear my young?” He asked, still keeping his eyes facing forward and away from her.

There was no thinking that question over, she knew the answer and didn’t hesitate to let him know. “Sei-i! A thousand times sei-i!” She exclaimed trying to regain his favor she had assumed she’d lost.

“I can’t allow you to go to the game preserve, I can’t risk you being hurt or taken from me. The pain would be a thousand deaths for me if something were to happen to you or if I never got to see the bright soul in your deknas again.” He said as he finally turned around to look at her.

He looked sad, genuinely sad. She hadn’t seen him so depressed yet. Angry, upset, happy and content but never sad. She didn’t like it, Dae’er wasn’t supposed to be sad or weakened by something, he was supposed to be strong and pillar like. Whatever had him upset was really getting to him and was now getting to her too. She felt like she needed to fix whatever it was, that it was part of her role as his mate. He provided her with everything else, the least she thought she could do was soothe and comfort him in his time of distress.

“I have to do what I need to do to show everyone that I am worthy of the position I am going to be in. It’s frightening, I’ll admit but I’m doing it for you and for the rest of my new people. I want to prove that I can do it! That I can fight and defend them just as well as you can.” She stated as she walked over to him and wrapped her arms around his waist.

“What if you didn’t have to? What if there was a way for us to stay together and you could still uphold your position without having to kill anything or risk your life for it?” He asked as he stroked her hair.

“I thought your father said I had to fight, no matter what.” She inquired as he pulled her away to look at her face.

“Remember when you told me of the female ooman in the companion station and how she was with young when she hadn’t been before?” He asked.

“Sei-i.” She replied hesitantly while looking at him suspiciously.

“I looked into it and there’s a Yautja medical scientist that’s been experimenting on the ooman females. He has discovered a way for them to conceive Yautja pups.” He said as his eyes looked into hers seriously.

She didn’t really like that word, experimenting. She immediately pictured horrible things like poor tortured monkeys and people being strapped down and injected with weird stuff. It crept her out, that’s for sure but Dae’er seemed really interested in whatever this scientist was up to so she held back her disgruntled opinion and listened to him.

“I don’t understand what this has to do with me fighting at the game preserve.” She said as she ran her fingers down his stomach.

“If we agreed to the medical scientists experiments and you conceived my pup then you won’t be forced to fight at the game preserve. My father can’t knowingly put a pup heavy female, especially his own son’s mate, into a potentially dangerous environment, it’s against the laws.” Dae’er explained and Erie thought it over.

Her? Pregnant? She didn't think she'd ever have kids back on Earth. She was so overwhelmed with school then work that something like settling down, getting married and having kids was far from her agenda. Now though, she had all the time in the world didn't she? She could have a ton of Dae'er's pups, as he calls them and never have any of the side effects of being pregnant because of the chronological cessation.

Her body would never change and she wouldn't age so she could keep up with popping out pups but was that what she really wanted? It seemed like they were using a pup to just get out of her having to fight and that seemed like a terrible excuse to have a one. She looked at Dae'er's hopeful eyes and wondered if he actually wanted a pup or was he only wanting to try all of this for her sake.

"Do you want a pup?" She asked. "Do you want one just because it will save me or do you honestly want to have one?"

He squatted down so he was looking up at her and he took her face into his hands. His blood red eyes looked sincere as he ran the pad of his thumb over her bottom lip then tilted his head to the side and purred.

"When I realized how important you were to me, I pledged to devote myself to you. No matter what the cost or consequence it had upon me, as long as you are content and satisfied with my care for you, then I have succeeded in being your male. I cherish you beyond any treasure that exists, more than the air I take into my lungs, and to see you nourishing our shared life in your womb would truly fulfill my duty as your male, as a prince and as a Yautja. Sei-i, I want a pup just as much as I want you safe and alive." He said as he stood from his crouch and ran his hand down a few locks of her hair.

He cared for her that much? She supposed it wouldn't hurt to at least hear how the experiment worked and if it didn't sound too bad, then she might consider it. Hell, who was she kidding, she'd do it just so he was happy, no other reasons required. Besides, she had no real reason not to. It wasn't like she had an expiration date.

"Alright." She nodded. "I'll do it but first I want to meet this scientist guy and hear what I need to do and what the experiment does exactly." She stated.

"Sei-i, of course. Forgive me, No'elia, this was the reason I've been preoccupied. I've been meeting with the scientist, asking questions and going over every detail he could elicit. I'd never ask you to do something that would harm you and I want to make sure nothing fatal would come to you from the experiment." He explained.

She was still a little upset about him keeping something from her. This was definitely something she deserved to know about since it involved her. She supposed she understood why he did it. He didn't want to worry her or get her hopes up. He wanted to make sure everything was perfect and safe before filling her in. She immediately felt silly for thinking the worst.

"I suppose I can forgive you." She said and he trilled at her.

"Good." He replied as he tucked her into his scorching skin for a tight hug.

After she showered and attended second meal, she made a point to inform Dae'er of her want to meet with the scientist. Dae'er had no objection as he liked to be as thorough as she was when it came to asking questions, the workers at the front of the medical bay however, didn't seem to want to let her through.

They tried to get Dae'er to force her out in the waiting room but he wasn't having it. At the current moment, he was making the female shrink in on herself by raising his voice and cursing at her in Yautja. It wasn't working as the female was far too frightened to even think. The doors to the back slid open and a tall broad male Yautja walked out.

He was wearing white coverings that covered his entire body and was skin tight. His dreads had different colored rings she hadn't seen on any of the sain'jas before and she guessed they were from his climb up the ladder in the medical field instead of fighting. His biomask was a matte silver and was pristine, quite a change from the battered ones she was used to looking at.

As he came closer she saw he was wearing a red belt made of soft rope that hung loosely around his waist. It had several red leather bags hanging from it and she wondered what they were for. He glanced at Erie and nodded in acknowledgment then tended to the Dae'er situation.

"Arissa, I've got this, you may return to your original orders." The male said as he moved Dae'er without touching him.

Dae'er was angered by the lack of respect from the female worker and so he was easily coaxed into going where the male wanted him to as he gave a death stare at the female. He used gestures to guide him towards the doors he came out of and then waited for Erie to join Dae'er before following them.

She kept looking back at the male. This had to be the scientist Dae'er was talking about. He looked way more esteemed than the other workers walking around. While she was glancing at him, he was staring at her. Checking her body out and sizing her up for god knows what.

Dae'er seemed to know the way as he led them through the halls and stopped at a set of double doors. The male moved to the front as he placed a hand on a scanner before the doors opened and let them through.

It was an office, or the equivalent of one. There was a metal table with a stool that had wheels on it on one side and two non-wheeling ones on the other. There were massive amounts of books and random papers scattered all over the top of it as well as some devices she was unfamiliar with. A large projection was behind the desk showing something written in Yautja that she, unfortunately, could not read.

To the right of the office area was an examine room with a table and a counter full of an array of tools and more devices as well as the normal items you'd see in an ooman examine room. There were also machines, an array of lab equipment, some containers that looked similar to the ones you'd see in a chemistry class and a small fridge filled with vials and bottles.

The whole room made her a little nervous. She couldn't help but wonder if any of that stuff would be used on her. The medical Yautja and Dae'er had already taken their seats and

were patiently waiting for her. She quickly sat down on the stool beside Dae'er and scanned over the desk in front of her.

"Forgive my mess. Usually my guests come announced but I seem to be on Prince Dae'er's schedule and not my own." He trilled, insinuating he was making a joke but Dae'er looked dead serious and not in the mood for teasing.

The male cleared his throat and switched to professional mode. "It is finally nice to meet you, Ju'ha No'elia. I am Pilo." He said as he thrust his hand forward causing Dae'er to jerk in his seat.

He was shaking her hand! An ooman gesture she never thought she'd see again, especially not on Yautja Prime. When Dae'er realized Pilo wasn't trying to hurt her, she slid her hand into his and shook it firmly.

"You know of ooman gestures?" She questioned suspiciously.

"Sei-i, of course. As you will learn, I am very fond of your species and their way of life as well as their anatomy. It is surprising as most of my kind treats yours like household pets but there are more couples like you on this planet, believe it or not." Pilo said as he began to organize his desk a little.

"That female, the one I saw in the daycare, she was pregnant with a Yautja pup..er..baby, wasn't she?" Erie jumped straight in with the questions, eager to know everything this Pilo character knew.

"Sei-i, she was one of my patients. I'm not sure what your mate has told you so far, so shall I start from the beginning?" He questioned.

Erie was interested in the "was" part of his reply about the other girl but she also wanted to hear his story on the experiment. She shifted her weight and glanced at Dae'er who was looking at Pilo, ready for him to get on with it. Erie nodded and Pilo changed the projection behind him to an image of an ooman female and a female Yautja.

"As you can see, our kind and yours are very similar with some obvious features that aren't similar at all. Aside from physical appearance though, our body structures are shockingly alike. We have one single heart." Pilo said as he pointed at the hearts of the two images. "Two kidneys, one liver, a highly complex brain and a more obvious feature, our skeletal structure as well as our reproductive organs. My question when I began my study on the humans was why couldn't they bear Yautja pups? Everything was practically the same, even DNA structure was incredibly identical." He switched the image to two rotating DNA strands and highlighted the areas that humans and Yautjas shared.

Erie recalled learning about all of this while she was in college so she was able to follow along quite easily. Dae'er however, looked puzzled and unnerved by it all. He was used to spilling DNA, not understanding it.

"As I researched and studied oomans, comparing them to Yautja, it's not a matter of clashing chromosomes, it's more of a matter of body size and strength. A normal gestation for Yautja females is around 18 months. The pups require more gestation to develop the muscles that are one of the main identifiable traits of a Yautja. A pup starts out life with the strength of an ooman teenager to put it into perspective and therefore require an entire 6 to 8 months to

build purely muscle. That time is crucial to how strong they will be throughout their life.” Pilo explained as he showed several images of a growing Yautja pup in the womb.

Dae’er didn’t like it. He was severely uncomfortable with seeing all of this. She wasn’t sure if it was because of the images of private parts or the fact they didn’t belong to her, either way it was a little interesting how he could take down armies of creatures but couldn’t handle a little slide show of the female anatomy. She smirked and went back to watching Pilo.

“So what determines how much strength they gain? Does it solely rely on DNA and genetics or does another factor come into play with the development?” She asked and Pilo turned to face her.

“I’m sure you’ve noticed how different every Yautja is and it would be a safe assumption to say that it was solely on genetics but surprisingly it’s not. In fact, the mother plays an important role in how strong her young will be. This is where it’s complicated for oomans to perform. A Yautja mother takes in nourishment, eats the right foods, gets vitamin boosts and even her body has stored away a massive amount of nutrition just for producing a strong pup. Humans don’t do this, they solely rely on what they take in to provide for the pup.” Pilo stood and walked over to the small fridge then retrieved a rack of vials for syringe guns.

Erie watched him bring it over and set it down on the desk then selected one and held it up for them to see. “This small vial contains all the vitamin and nutrition that a Yautja female stores over a lifetime. More than enough for one ooman female to produce pups that will grow into males as big as our Prince here.” Pilo said as he gently placed the vial back into its place.

“That’s great and all but don’t I have to be pregnant first to use those super vitamins?” Erie asked.

“Which brings me to my next point.” Pilo picked up the rack and took it back over to the fridge then he retrieved another. This one was filled with vials twice as small as the first one and their contents were neon green like Yautja blood. “Before we can use the nourishment supplements we first have to, more or less, fool Prince Dae’er’s seed into believing it’s fertilizing a Yautja female’s eggs.”

Dae’er growled lowly in his throat. He was really uncomfortable with the conversation but Pilo didn’t seem to be threatened by him. He was far too caught up in his explanation of his research and creations that the world and Yautja rules just went right out the window. Erie saw Dae’er though, noted his tresses rising from agitation and the scraping of his tusks against the inside of his biomask as they flexed in anger.

He must really dislike Pilo’s amount of comfort with her and the fact he’s talking about pups and fertilization like she wasn’t his mate and just some random female. Pilo had even come around the desk and was sitting on the edge of it in front of her, showing her the vials.

“What I’ll do is give you two full vials then you and your mate will..” He gestured with his hand as he searched for the word but Erie knew what he was talking about. ‘You know.’ He stated. “Based on past experiments, it can take one session of mating and one round of the injection or it can take three or more. Like I’ve stated, it’s just in an experimental stage so any unusual occurrences may be new and undocumented.” Pilo explained as he took the vials back to the fridge.

"I think it's safe to say that we're both interested in participating in the experiment. I just have a few questions pertaining to the pup and the side effects." She stated while Dae'er was still fuming with aggravation beside her.

"Sure, go ahead and ask away." Pilo said as he stopped at the end of the desk and crossed his arms.

"Well first off, will the pup have any deformities or abnormalities that could affect its way of living?" She questioned.

"So far in the several experiments performed in the past, six females have brought their pups to full term and two have had complications. The pups that are alive now seem to have no visible abnormalities. They do tend to gestate an extremely short amount of time. My research has discovered that it's because of how small ooman females are compared to Yautja's and the vitamin boost is so highly concentrated that it speeds up the gestation period. When your pup is born, it will require a lot of premature care to ensure a healthy life." Pilo said as he looked back and forth between Dae'er and her.

"How short of a gestation? What is the average?" Dae'er finally asked a question.

"Between three and five Yautja months." Pilo answered.

"Yautja females require 18 months to produce sturdy pups but ooman females only need three months? It seems like the pups would be less than adequate when birthed from ooman females." Dae'er stated.

"The vials of supplements feed the pup faster than the natural ones from a Yautja female. The pups are fully grown and at full strength in a shorter amount of time. I assure you, Prince Dae'er, that your pup will not be disappointing." Pilo said and Dae'er grumbled as he shifted his shoulders.

"My other question is, will it look Yautja or human or a mixture of both?" Erie asked.

"I've yet to see a physical appearance mixture of Yautja and ooman, no pups with ooman skin and mandibles if that's what your inquiring about. Depending on whose genes are more dominant will determine if the pup looks Yautja or ooman." Pilo explained as he reached over and changed the image of the screen to that of ooman females with their faces blurred out, holding newborn pups.

"This female had a Yautja looking pup. While this one," he said as he changed the image to another girl. "Had an ooman one. I've tested the DNA of all the born pups and confirmed that they are indeed hybrids with Yautja and ooman DNA. I'm guessing you will be more interested in having a Yautja pup?" Pilo looked at Dae'er and not at Erie like he was asking him and not her.

Erie looked at her mate with interested eyes, wondering what his response would be. She honestly didn't care what their pup turned out to look like. She'd be ecstatic with either outcome. Dae'er on the other hand, she supposed he would be more happy with a Yautja looking pup than one that looked ooman. That was just her guess though.

He rumbled in his chest from the sudden attention on him. "Ooman." He replied.

Well that wasn't expected but for some reason she was happy with his response. She leaned against his bicep then kissed it before sitting upright again.

"Well, if you two have no further questions, we can give you your first round of the procedure today if you desire." Pilo said as he walked back over to the examine room and began preparing the table and a syringe gun.

Erie looked at Dae'er for any sign or hint that he was uncertain or concerned. He made a trilling sound as he tilted his head to the side, his black and red dreads shuffling over his shoulder as he did. She frowned at him. She wanted to do this, so bad she wanted to make him happy but she was worried about herself. The whole procedure was scary especially since it's experimental and what if something bad happened to her or the pup? Dae'er would most certainly blame himself and giving him any amount of stress or guilt was something she would never wish upon him.

He brushed her cheek with his knuckle and purred at her. She tucked her bottom lip nervously as she stood and walked over to Pilo.

"Sei-i? We are proceeding?" He questioned as Erie hopped up onto the table.

"Well, I'm here aren't I?" She replied as she rolled up her sleeve and he chuffed at her.

"It doesn't go in the arm." He said as he loaded the small vial into a modified syringe gun with a three inch needle on it.

He mouth dropped and she felt Dae'er's arm easing her back onto the table. She panicked a little as Pilo began to clean her lower abdomen with a sterile pad.

"I know we concluded our conversation just moments ago but I believe, in my current situation, that I may have forgotten one crucial question." She stated nervously as Pilo lifted the syringe gun and held it in his hands while he looked at her.

"What question may that be?" He asked as he popped the cap off a pen and marked her ovaries.

"What exactly does this do again? And where exactly does it need to go?" She inquired nervously.

"This is a compound I made myself. It will coat your ooman eggs with a serum that will fool Prince Dae'er's seed into thinking your eggs are Yautja eggs. Don't worry, it will still be your pup and his, this is just like a perfume to help encourage fertilization." He explained.

"And where does that huge needle need to go again?" She kept her eyes on that capped needle that would soon be in her gut.

"It has to be injected directly into the ovary where your eggs are stored." He said as he placed his hand on her abdomen.

She gasped and looked up at Dae'er with uncertainty but continued to ask Pilo questions. "Don't I get pain medicine? Or at least a local anesthetic?" She questioned.

"H-ko, it will interfere with the serum." He replied as he aimed the gun at the first ovary.

She winced and held her breath as the initial jab pierced through her skin. She literally felt her flesh tear under the needles broad tip. It was painful but when it hit her ovary she moaned out in excruciating pain unlike any she had felt before.

Dae'er pinned her to the table as she jolted around. The syringe gun clicked three times then she watched through strained eyes as the bright green vial disappeared into her body. It felt like her tiny little ovary was about to explode inside of her. When Pilo pulled the syringe out, he immediately wiped away the steam of blood and green serum off her skin with a towel.

Tears from the pain spilled out of the corner of her eyes and when she thought she was through, Pilo was loading up another syringe. She couldn't do it, it was far too painful with no relief whatsoever but Dae'er wasn't going to let her up. He held down her chest with his own and used his hands to hold down her legs, leaving enough room for Pilo to reach her ovary.

She grunted and screamed, yelled and cried but this was going to happen whether she wanted it to or not. Pilo quickly inserted the needle and her pain doubled. She barely heard the clicks of the syringe gun through her cries but Pilo was standing beside the table cleaning the gun before she knew it was over.

When Pilo turned back around he had a fur covered ice pack and was placing it across her midsection. It didn't help much but the cool sensation did at least distract the pain from her ovaries occasionally. Dae'er was up on the table with her and had her cuddled against his chest, purring up a storm.

"Your mi flower should repair the entry wounds and once the pain is gone or at least tolerable you should be able to continue with the easiest part of the experiment." Pilo said as he started cleaning up and putting the empty vials into a sterilizer.

"How long will it take to know if she is with pup?" Dae'er asked as he kept Erie close to this chest.

"After her pain has subsided and you mate with her, I won't know if it was a successful mating for at least a week. If it was, then I will monitor her and the pup until full gestation. If it wasn't, then we will have to do another round of the serum and try again." Pilo explained as he handed Dae'er another fur ice pack for her to use later. "Sometimes it takes one round and sometimes it takes two or more. It depends on how well your seed responds to the serum, Prince Dae'er."

"What do you recommend I do to increase our chances of a successful mating?" Dae'er asked as he gently lifted Erie up off the table keeping her cradled against him.

"Frequent mating. Once she is pain free, I suggest you skip a few daily activities to devote to her. The more the merrier, isn't that how that ooman saying goes?" Pilo's question was towards her but she was in far too much pain to respond. "I'll escort you out."

The lights up above them were much more brighter than the ones out in the citadel. Their intensity reminded her of human hospitals like the one she worked in. She didn't understand why they had to be so bright. What was the point of it?

She closed her eyes and kept them closed as Dae'er carried her slowly and carefully back towards his wing of the citadel. She didn't even care if everyone was staring or wondering

what was wrong with her, she was in so much pain she just wanted to get in Dae'er's bed and not move for days.

She whined when she recognized the hall that led to Dae'er's, causing him to increase his pace slightly. She couldn't believe other girls went through this. How in the world did they survive without a mi flower? How did anyone survive without one? She could probably go to sleep and when she woke up, she'd be pain free and back to normal. She was so glad she found the little plant so long ago. It was truly a wonderful thing.

Dae'er laid her on the pallet of furs that made up his bed and she whimpered a little. Dae'er began his ritual of piling furs on her and she objected by yanking them off as he put one on.

"No'elia, I don't want you to get cold." He stated.

"I'm fine." She strained out.

He sensed her slight aggravation from being in pain and ceased his fur piling. He squatted down beside the bed and looked over her body.

"Is there anything I can do? A drink of water? Something to eat?" Dae'er asked.

"A drink." She replied and he hastily went to get it.

She was praying to Paya and God right now that this first round of serum worked. She wasn't sure she could go through with a second or a third. She couldn't believe that in 3 to 5 months she might be laying in these white pelts with a pup in her arms. The thought was almost enough to distract her from the pain of her ovaries..almost.

She wondered what Yautja do to prepare for pups. Did they buy cribs and clothes or blankets and diapers? Dae'er came back in with a water container and squatted down again to help her get a drink from it. She raised up and took a big swig.

"Do we need to get anything for the pup?" She asked and Dae'er tilted his head in confusion.

"What would we need to get?" He asked, answering her question with a question.

"When ooman's prepare for their young, they go out and buy things you need to care for it. Blankets, clothes, carriers and a place for them to sleep. Would we need any of that stuff?" She said as she winced as she laid back down.

"Sei-i but I will take care of it. You only need to worry about carrying it." He replied as he cupped her face gently.

"What if I want to pick something out, like blankets or something?" She asked.

"I will get the best of the best for our pup. It will not be swaddled in a poor quality pelt if that is what is worrying you." He said as he stood and towered over her.

"H-ko, I don't know, it's just part of the experience of having a pup. Picking things out, selecting colors and cute little clothes. Maybe it's an ooman thing." She said as Dae'er reached down and pulled one fur over her.

“If it is important to you to select the color of pelt our pup is held in then you choose the color and I will hunt the creature with the best quality fur in your desired shade.” He said as he removed his bio mask and hooked it onto his belt.

“You have to retrieve the items yourself?” She asked.

“Sei-i, it is my role as a male. I will pick the best fur and leather and craft the best holding for it. I will not disappoint you, No’elia. I will prove that you have chosen the best mate.” He replied as he stared down at her, looking over her body and her hands.

“You don’t need to prove yourself anymore. I already know I’ve chosen the best mate.” She said smiling up at him.

He trilled happily. “You should sleep.” He said as he headed for the door.

“Where are you going?” She asked.

“To train as I won’t have much time to when you awake.” His reply caused her to blush as she remembered Pilo’s instructions.

She had to admit, she was pretty excited for that part. Dae’er was amazingly good at pleasing her. She never had to explain to him what to do or how to do it, he just knew all the right places to touch and when. It was incredible. She wondered if it was just him or all Yautja males that were amazingly experienced in bed. Maybe it had to do with his sense of smell or his ability to pick up on emotions. Either way, she didn’t care, as long as he kept doing it.

She adjusted the furry ice pack on her belly then tilted her head to the side in an attempt to get semi comfortable. She couldn’t move anything but her arms and her head and if she did, her ovaries let her know she had fudged up in doing so. She was praying to both Gods again that when she woke up, everything was pain free and back to normal.

Chapter 17

DISCLAIMER I do not own Predator, Alien or any characters pertaining to the AVP franchise!

No'elia had awoke the day after the procedure pain free and Dae'er had wasted no time in following Pilo's advice. Five days he and No'elia didn't leave his dwellings, not even for meals. He had his servant bring in cart after cart of meat and desserts that No'elia favored and in between mating sessions, he'd feed her and allow her to rest then he'd advance on her again.

They had just finished from mating in the bathing pool for the third or fourth time and No'elia was laying groggily in the fur pelts. The smooth skin on her hips, buttocks and her neck bore his claw marks and slight bruises, signs of their multiple matings. Even the air in the room hung heavy with both of their scents.

Pilo had said a week, one week and he can test her for a pup. His bio mask could pick up a growing pup as well but only when it was several weeks into gestation. Until then, they'd have to rely on Pilo's equipment and tests. He didn't like seeing how the male acted around No'elia. He understood he had an interest in her kind but he didn't have to look at her like she was *his* mate. If Dae'er didn't need him, he'd certainly put the male in his place.

Dae'er picked up the water container from the cart and went to fill it up so No'elia had something to drink. As he set the cylinder shaped container under the spout, his servant entered his home.

"My liege, your sire requests your attention." The male stated as he bowed to Dae'er.

"Tell him I am busy." Dae'er replied as he filled the container up.

"He said it is imperative and pertains to Ju'ha No'elia." His servant's statement had Dae'er looking at him in surprise.

What else could his sire possibly do to make No'elia's situation more difficult than it already is. Dae'er handed the container to his servant.

"Make sure No'elia has water and food. I want you to check on her frequently and no visitors. Alert me if she leaves this wing of the citadel." Dae'er instructed and the male nodded in understanding.

Dae'er went into his room and immediately began to put his awu'asa on. His servant set the container down on the table then checked the trays of food and dessert before dispersing his dwellings. Dae'er was interested in what his sire had to say. Perhaps he had decided to call off the stipulation or he had something to add to it. He snarled out loud at that thought. His father was a strict male and such actions wouldn't be surprising to Dae'er.

As he entered the port to board his ship, he saw Talia shoving at Seleana, urging her into a ship. Dae'er scoffed at the sight and the scene reminded him that he hadn't told No'elia of Seleana's recent joining in her trip to the game preserve. Perhaps it was best until they found out the results from Pilo on their efforts for a pup. Any stress might have an effect on her body and make it much more difficult in conceiving. He brushed the situation aside as he boarded his ship.

His sire's servant was waiting for him at the port when he arrived. The male was in a fluster as he bowed then took off quickly down the corridors. Whatever was going on must've had an effect on his father's servants too. It just made the whole situation that more intriguing.

They bypassed the throne room and the dining area, his father's usual meeting spots. The servant was leading him down his father's personal wing, where his study and bedroom was. Dae'er hadn't been in this part of the citadel in decades. In fact, after he was no longer considered a pup, the area was off limits. Dae'er was worried now.

"Has my sire fallen ill?" Dae'er asked the servant.

"It is not my place to speak of my master's health." The male's response irked him a little but he couldn't be upset, he'd have his servant do the same.

He followed the male into his father's room and if Dae'er didn't see a massive forearm lying over the arm of his chair, he would've thought the room was empty. He nodded at the servant and he bowed again before closing the doors and leaving. Dae'er stayed near the entrance, unsure of what his sire was up to.

The furs on his bed were neatly piled and a tray of meat sat rotting on a table near the shaded window. A box made of wood was opened at his feet and, from his spot near the door, Dae'er could barely make out the items near the top of it. Papers, something made of leather and the handle of a brush like the one No'elia had requested from him long ago.

"Come in, my son." His sire's voice was low and melancholy, a tone he had never heard his father speak in before.

Dae'er walked slowly towards the side of the chair, close enough to see his father's features but not close enough that he could reach out and touch him. He didn't care if his father was upset about something, he was still the stern and cold male that he had known all his life, he wasn't about to feel sympathetic for him.

"What do you want?" Dae'er asked firmly.

"Nothing." His sire replied.

"Then why have you summoned me here? You demand I come at once, relaying messages that it concerned my mate and now you say it was for not? I haven't the time for games." Dae'er said gruffly as he turned to leave.

"There is a purpose to me summoning you, but you must be willing to listen." His sire said.

"You've wasted more than enough of my time so whatever you need to say, you better speak of it with haste." Dae'er stated as he stepped away from the doors, allowing them to

close.

“What I have to say is a subject that I haven’t spoken of in seven hundred years. Only the Ancients know of it now and none of them would even dare to speak of it.” His sire said as he moved his other arm and Dae’er barely got a glimpse of something in his hand.

“Even before my mother?” Dae’er questioned.

“An entire century before your mother was even thought of.” His sire said as he motioned for Dae’er to sit in the arm chair against the wall.

He took the seat and listened to his father’s tale.

“I was barely a Blooded male, so full of confidence and arrogance, I truly believed at the time that I ruled this universe before I had even began to understand it. I went from galaxy to galaxy, exploring planets and hunting to my heart’s delight. Wanting to test my own strength and see just how much I had flourished with my training, I sought out a few oomans, wanting to use them as sacrifices for the kainde amedha. I went to Earth, stalked the oomans, looking for potential and what I found was far beyond anything I could have possibly imagined.” His sire said as he moved what was in his hand to the front of him.

Dae’er could see now that it was a piece of paper with a still image on it. He couldn’t quite make out who it was or what was on it but his father was looking at it with sorrow in his eyes. His mandibles moved into a smile but it was obvious he wasn’t happy.

“What did you find on Earth?” Dae’er questioned, trying to urge his father on in his telling of the story.

“I’d captured three oomans but I needed one more for what I had planned so I returned to the small primitive village and saw an ooman female retrieving water from a hole in the ground. I was cloaked but she still sensed my presence. She had already impressed me and I had just laid deknas on her. When I moved to take her, she didn’t run, like the others had, like most oomans do, but instead, she looked at me. Afraid at first,” he said as he trilled. “But then she had become more curious than concerned for her life. She approached me, reached out to me, used those pyode hands of hers to feel along my chest and skin.” His sire said as he brushed his fingertips along his chest as if he was reliving the moments he was speaking of.

Dae’er knew exactly what his father was talking about. He himself had never experienced anything as soft as ooman female hands. When No’elia’s touched his hard hide, it was like a plush fur was being dragged over his body. Cool and smooth, a sensation he’d never be able to live without.

“She felt her way up to my bio mask and, intrigued, I removed it. It wasn’t until those tender palms of hers brushed along my mandibles did she become uneasy again. She had yanked her hand away, stumbled over the container she had filled and backed into the wall surrounding the hole in the ground. I watched her, sensed her rising fear and panic as she used the same hands she had just used to explore my skin, to feel along the walls, desperate to get away from the monster she had found.” His father said as he continued with his story.

“She was unable to see.” Dae’er stated.

“Sei-i, her God had cursed her with the lack of vision. It was the reason she didn’t flee and the reason she was so calm in her touch on me. I followed her as she frantically tried to get

away from me. Needless to say, I was interested in her, curious to know how she lived without seeing what she did with her hands so I stayed on Earth, set my previous captures free and just watched her.” He explained.

“Did she know of your presence?” Dae’er questioned.

“Sei-i, she was very good at using her other senses. She could hear me even when I was being as silent as the dead, smell me when I wasn’t even releasing a scent and of course she just felt my presence even though I was cloaked. Over time, she grew more comfortable with my constant company, so much so that when she was alone, she’d call out to me. Our bond had grown tremendously and I found myself not wanting to leave her behind when it was time for me to leave the planet. It took a lot of convincing and promises of eternal companionship to get her to come willingly but eventually she agreed.” His sire said.

“Why didn’t you just take her?” Dae’er asked, interested in his father’s softness towards the ooman, a softness he hadn’t witnessed his entire life of knowing his sire.

“I could’ve but I didn’t want to tarnish the bond I had worked so hard to create. Her feelings and thoughts of me were more valuable than any trophy that exists, tainting any of them by causing her harm would’ve been dishonorable in my opinion.” Dae’er couldn’t believe how highly he was speaking of this blind ooman female.

She had received more care and concern than he had his entire life and he was his father’s own flesh and blood! His father never cared for oomans, in fact, he despised them, so to hear of him having one, especially one he cherished, was completely unexpected. It was like he was looking at a completely different male than the one he had known his whole life. The female must’ve had a strong hold on his father’s hard heart, a hold no one else, not even his mother, could even think of gripping onto.

“What did grandsire think of your new bond with her?” Dae’er questioned.

“Ooman companions weren’t abnormal. Companions had been around long before my grandfather existed but a prince having one, the First Born prince at that, was unheard of. Why would royalty need companionship or the entertainment of one? We had plenty of souls to occupy our time with so spending any amount of time with my ooman, was like a slap in the face to those that desired my attention, my sire included.” His father explained.

“Grandsire didn’t like her?” Dae’er questioned.

“H-ko, he didn’t. He despised the fact that his only son was obsessed with an ooman and sei-i, I mean obsessed. Why wouldn’t I have been? She was as exciting as being selected by a mentor for progressive training. I took her everywhere, on kv’vars, to some of the beautiful planets I had found in my adventures, showed her everything our planet had to offer and then some. I was like you are with No’elia. All my time and devotion went to my ooman female. Waking in the dawn and seeing her sleeping safe and soundly beside me in the furs was truly a gift from Paya herself. She was a rich drink of c’nlip, the feel of a sword as it collides with flesh, the roar of a crowd after a successful and fruitful kv’var, she was everything that was good and then some.” Dae’er could relate with his sire in his description of his female ooman.

He felt the same exact way about No’elia. He had never thought that the things he considered enjoyable were only half as fun when No’elia wasn’t around. With her presence, everything was intensified by a million and then some. He didn’t think anyone could ever

understand how he felt about No'elia or anything for that matter, until now. His father seemed to be explaining Dae'er's thoughts like they were his own, so much so it was slightly unnerving.

Not because it was if he could read his mind, but because he was his sire. This male that was broken into pieces by an ooman female was the same male that shattered his innocence as a pup. From the day he could stand upright, his sire had given him harsh lessons. Letting him get beaten to a pulp by his brother and his father's other trainee, denying him a meal if he was even a second late to sitting down at the table and even forcing him to train and push his body to the point he felt like he would perish from exhaustion, all actions of his cold hearted father. Yet the story he was telling Dae'er right now, made his father seem like a compassionate and caring male. It was strange and near taboo.

"What happened to her?" Dae'er asked and his father's face grew even more grim.

"Five decades she lived with me and my sire seemed to believe it was five decades too long. He told me she was a distraction, a diversion from my royal duties and that I needed to get rid of her but I couldn't. I couldn't just return her to her planet or give her away to someone else, doing so would've been like cutting my own beating heart from my chest. So I begged my father," his sire gripped his armchair with his claws, the fabric ripping beneath them as he spoke.

"Begged! Pledged him not to take her and promised to put forth a greater effort to my duties but my sire was set on his decision for me to dispose of her." Dae'er watched as his father lifted the image and it vibrated in his fingertips from, a side effect of how worked up he was getting over the story.

"I couldn't do it, not honorably and so my sire took matters into his own claws. He came in the middle of the night, ripped her from my bed and out of my arms. I fought the hardest I ever had but I was no match for the Elites that my sire had brought to restrain me. It was like having a thousand swords plunged into my flesh all at once, watching as my own kind held her down and seeing those sweet beautiful blind eyes spill tears of fear and confusion while having to listen to her soft voice cry out to me, pleading for me to help her. Not even Cetanu's swords could bring such a torture to my soul as my sire extended his wrist blades and cut through her slender neck like it was nothing, like he hadn't just severed everything that mattered to me." His father stared at the image as he spoke. "That day, I pledged that my heart would never be so open to another, not even your mother got to feel the warmth that I gave my ooman female. Not that I didn't cherish your mother, for I did and still do. She has given me my two sons and fulfilled her purpose but nothing more. I never felt the same sunlight from her as I had with my ooman." His sire said as he stood from his chair and walked over to Dae'er, holding the image out to him.

Dae'er looked up at his father's sad face then took the image from him. It was small and worn but it was still clear enough to make out the image of a female ooman riding on his father's back. She was smiling, with her hands wrapped around a younger version of his sire and her eyes were the same color as No'elia's as was her hair. She was beautiful and much taller than No'elia but he could see why his father felt so strongly for her.

"Her name?" Dae'er asked.

"Raen." His father replied.

“Like rain, from the sky?” Dae’er inquired as he handed the image back onto him.

“Sei-i, like the rain from the sky.” His father repeated as he took it and rubbed his fingers over Raen’s face.

“I’ve used her as a reason to become stronger, a reminder of how weak I once was. I never wanted to be that helpless again so every trophy, every milestone and every odds I defied was devoted to her. I wouldn’t be the legendary king I am today if it weren’t for the impact she had upon my soul. It was the affection of an ooman female that drove my want to be a better male.” Dae’er watched as his father walked over to the giant hearth in front of his chair and after a few more moments of staring at the image, tossed it into the blue flames.

“I don’t understand. Why would you burn it?” Dae’er questioned as his father sat down in his chair and began pulling items from the wood box beside his feet.

“She has done her job, there’s no reason in keeping her here with my any longer. I should’ve freed her spirit long ago.” His father explained as he tossed in leather coverings, Raen’s he presumed, then the brush for a mane.

“If you valued an ooman female so highly, why do you act as if you despise them now?” Dae’er questioned as his father picked up a bond bouquet of dead flowers and placed them into the fire.

“The ooman companions I see today are weak. So frail and afraid and nothing like my Raen was. It irked me to know that those feeble and worthless oomans got to live while mine had to perish. It’s not abhorrence I feel for them, it’s disappointment. They are capable of so much more yet they never take advantage of it. I see the fire in your female that I did in mine, she has given me hope that I thought had been long lost.” His father said as he lifted a restraint for hair, gripped it tight in his fist then tossed it into the fire.

Dae’er understood now. His sire’s cold heart wasn’t because he lacked a soul, in fact it was the opposite. His soul had been so great and it only reverberated more when he found Raen. Losing her must have plummeted him into a depression that he never climbed out of. He was able to kill and kv’var because of his cut off conscious. He had nothing else to lose, why worry about something such as death? If Dae’er was in his father’s situation, he wasn’t sure if he could even live a day without contemplating taking his own life. To see his father not only continue with his, but to do so in her name, it was just proof of how much of a soul his father actually had.

His lack of care and compassion for Dae’er and his brother wasn’t from being stern and heartless, it was because he had given so much of it to Raen only to lose her that he probably believed if he gave any ounce of adoration to another that he’d only lose them too. His father would rather shut out all emotions and live within a shell of a male than risk losing someone he cared for again.

“Did you summon me here to just tell me this story?” Dae’er asked.

“I felt, after seven hundred years, that another existed that could possibly understand how I’ve felt all these decades.” His sire stood from his seat again with a hair piece made of shell in his hand and walked over to Dae’er. ‘I want to apologize, my son, for what I’ve done to your female. She reminds me of Raen so terribly and when I knew of her advancement I just..’ He rumbled in his throat. “I was envious when I should’ve been proud or at least

understanding. I hope you find it in your heart to forgive me one day. If it's not this day, then I understand. What I've done is just as cruel as what my sire did to me. I've prayed to Paya to give your female the strength to surpass this mistake of mine." His sire said as he rubbed the mane piece in his hands.

"If you are truly sorry then why not just call it off?" Dae'er exclaimed as he stood from his seat abruptly. "Why force her to continue?"

"It is out of my claws at this point. I've given my word amongst our kind, they expect her to prove herself. They need to see for themselves that she is worthy of being a Yauta ju'ha." His sire said and Dae'er snarled in protest. "Believe me, if I would I could but if she did not go to the game preserve, you will have more to worry about than just a few oomans to kill. There will be protests, demands that she be cast out or even dismissed. Neither of us would want that." His father said.

"If it weren't for you, she wouldn't even be in this situation! You've tossed her to the wolves and now you care for her well being?" Dae'er stepped closer to his father and made his tone ten times more serious. "Don't pauking stand there and act as if you value her life. You're the reason she is in this situation and if she dies, as Paya as my witness, I will kill you, father." Dae'er said as he looked his father dead in the eyes and promised.

"I understand, my son." His father said as he laid his hand against Dae'er's mandible and patted him firmly.

Dae'er pulled away from his father's hand and was headed for the door when his father spoke to him again. "I know of Pilo's experiment and your participation." His father's words stopped him dead in his tracks. He wasn't sure why he was so surprised and why he didn't realize it before. Something like what Pilo was doing would definitely need approval from a higher authority. Especially since it affected Yautja and oomans which meant his father must have agreed to Pilo's research and development towards the experiment. Did that mean that his father must have thought the same thing Dae'er had when it came to finding a way to save No'elia?

He quickly stuffed his shock deep down inside of himself and regained his composure. "And?" He asked.

"I hope I am the first to know of a future grandpup." His father said and Dae'er chuffed as he exited the room.

The first to know? Dae'er wasn't sure how much he actually liked his father's soft side. It was so unfamiliar that it made him uncomfortable but if he knew No'elia might be with a pup soon then he was certainly aware that he couldn't force her to go to the game preserve. Doing so would certainly be against the laws and would reflect horribly upon him, so he'd have no choice but to renig on his stipulation.

Dae'er boarded his ship and went straight home to his clans citadel. He stopped by the medical bay and after a little persuasion, Pilo agreed to test No'elia. It took a little more persuasion to get him to perform the test in Dae'er's dwellings. Dae'er went ahead to alert No'elia and Pilo would meet him shortly.

When he entered his home, No'elia had dressed in fur coverings and was asleep on the couch, a tray of food and a container of water on the table in front of her.

He squatted down beside her face and tucked a loose strand of her mane behind her ear. When he brushed his knuckle against her cheek, her eyes fluttered open.

“Dae’er?” She asked sleepily but then sat straight up. “Where did you go?” She exclaimed as she rubbed the sleep from one of her eyes.

“My sire required my attention.” He explained.

“Well, you should’ve woken me up or at least left a note. You scared me.” She stated as she reached for the water but couldn’t reach it so he grabbed it for her.

“Sei-i, a note next time.” He said and the door alerted him someone was at it.

She looked at him suspiciously as he stood and opened the door. Pilo came in with another medical worker behind him that carried the materials he needed for the test. Dae’er gestured at the table where No’elia’s tray of food was and the medical worker set all of the items on it then began to organize it.

“I don’t make house calls.” Pilo said as he joined the medical worker.

“You will make an exception for the ju’ha.” Dae’er stated and Pilo shot him a glance of distaste.

“What’s going on?” No’elia asked as she looked over the back of the couch at Dae’er.

“We’re testing you, for a pup.” Pilo answered and No’elia’s head swiveled between the two of them.

“It’s only been a few days hasn’t it? Not a week.” She pointed out.

“Sei-i but Prince Dae’er has stated his excitement and while the chances are slim, I still might be able to get a result.” Pilo responded.

No’elia turned back around and scooted closer to Pilo. “Alright, so what do I need to do?” She asked excitedly as she rolled up her sleeve.

“H-ko.” Pilo responded as he prepared an odd shaped device. “This doesn’t go in your arm.”

Chapter 18

Good afternoon! A quick update I think. I want to thank everyone for their extremely kind reviews! and also for all my new followers and favorites. I appreciate all of you! So for this update, I've got a short chapter and a pretty long one, I debated whether or not I should have chopped up Chapter 19 but meh, why not just let you guys read it all at once. I hope you all have a lovely rest of your day and another rapid update WILL be coming soon!

Thank you for choosing Devotion!

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Dae'er had been crushed when Pilo gave the news that she wasn't with pup yet. He didn't admit it outloud but Erie could tell. Deep down, he was devastated. Pilo instructed them to wait another week and to keep up with the mating but Dae'er wanted her to train and so she did. He pushed her twice as hard and tested her limits over and over again. She was sure he wasn't but it definitely felt like he was trying to kill her.

At the current moment she was trying to fight two River Ghosts at once when Dae'er summoned another. Two were difficult enough but three..it was damn near impossible. He at least left it deactivated. The one to her left started an all out frenzy attack with its long claws while another wrapped it's arm around her neck and held her up off the floor.

Erie glanced at Dae'er with panic on her face but he was just sitting in a crouch watching her like she wasn't about to get sliced and diced. She tried several times to land a blow to the one holding her with her elbow but it was no use, its hide was thick like tree bark. It flinched a couple times but remained resilient.

She turned her attention to the one getting closer to her with it's fanning claws. Pauk! Why was Dae'er letting this continue? She swung her legs outwards to try and kick at the one approaching but missed. She bit through tears as she put all her strength into the next one and managed to land a hit in it's groin and knock it onto it's back. She bent her leg and repeatedly kicked at the knee of the one holding her until it crunched beneath her boot causing it to screech in agony and release her.

The third River Ghost came to life and swiftly tried to swing at her. She rolled away from the blow and pulled out both her daggers as all three flocked to her at once. Fuck. Three at once. She was going to die, she was definitely going to die and Dae'er was just going to sit there and watch. She couldn't think like that, she couldn't let fear get the best of her. She exhaled heavily and sucked in a huge breath as she went to work. She charged at the one coming straight at her and leaped into the air to plant both of her feet into it's sternum and sent it flying in to the wall of the kehrite.

A second one took a swipe at her while she was on the floor and she extended her dah'kte to block the attack while she used her leg to sweep it off its feet. She moved quickly and buried her dah'kte into its gut and wrenched them hard like Dae'er had showed her. Black blood instantly pooled out of its gaping wound and coated her silver blades. One down, two to go.

A rough hard kick to the ribs sent her sliding across the floor. She groaned as she tried to collect herself but a River Ghost was already on top of her. It buried its burly foot into her chest, squashing the air from her lungs instantly. Her vision went black for a moment as she struggled to suck air back in and keep herself from passing out. The River Ghost showed no mercy as it stomped on her small form over and over again.

Erie looked up at the creature killing her and right as her vision began to fade out completely, it raised its claw to finish the job. A familiar thick arm blocked the blow and Erie watched as Dae'er impaled the creature with his dah'kte. Finally, he was helping her. She watched him roar loudly before he disappeared from her sight. The muffled sound of the last River Ghost screeching in pain meant he didn't go too far though.

Why did he wait to help her? Why did he put so much on her to begin with? He was taking his pain out on her, that was obvious, but why? He reappeared in her vision and she tried to wheeze out words but her lungs weren't going to let that happen.

"Get up." He sounded so far away but she was certain all she had to do was reach out to touch him. "Get up!"

Was he serious right now? Every one of her ribs had to be powder right now, her lungs felt like raisins and the continuous feel of something trickling down her body meant she had some internal bleeding somewhere. There was no way she could get up. She opened her mouth to protest but nothing came out.

"S-yuitde." He spat. "H-ko yin'tekai. Kint'e lou-dte kale."

She couldn't talk or move but she definitely could feel. How could he say such hurtful things? No honor. Useless female. He blamed her for not being with pup, didn't he? The pain she felt in her body was nothing compared to the pain she felt in her heart right now. The River Ghost may have stomped out the fight in her but Dae'er had just crushed her soul with nothing but words. This..this couldn't be real. This. Was a nightmare.

Erie awoke abruptly in a cold sweat. Well, a hot sweat due to the fact that Dae'er had piled every fur in the bed on top of her. She shoved them all off and quickly clambered out of the bed, ignoring the sleeping Dae'er beside her. She stumbled her way to the bathing pool and peered over the side into the slightly steaming water.

The dream had felt so real that her body felt like it had just dealt with the emotions in real life. Her hands were shaky, her breathing was unsteady and all she wanted to do was cry. Dae'er didn't really blame her for their lack of a pup right now and he certainly wouldn't allow her to endure such a heinous beating from anything. The only person blaming her, was herself. She felt like a failure, like she had let Dae'er down in every way possible.

She sobbed uncontrollably. She didn't need this right now. It was a week before she had to go to the game preserve and she needed a clear mind, a rested mind. How could she have one

though? Three times now they had gone through Pilo's experiment and all three times her body had failed. Maybe that was just it though...maybe she was just a failure.

Erie stared into the water at her reflection. Her mi flower was the only vibrant thing about her right now. She looked at her calloused hands, trained killer hands, before plunging them into the water and splashing some onto her face. She needed to get her shit together and now. How could she kill anything with these shaky hands? She clinched her fists to try and stop them from moving but they still shivered uncontrollably.

"No'elia." Dae'er's deep voice echoed through the room.

She glanced over her shoulder at him. "I'm fine. Just a nightmare." She mumbled before turning away to look back at the water.

"Your vitals are unstable." He replied and she swallowed another knot to keep tears from pouring out of her eyes again.

"I'm fine." She said firmly.

He didn't listen or take the hint that she wanted to be alone and before she could react he had scooped her up and was carrying her back to the bed. She fought him a little but his slow and alluring purring lifted her slightly from the hole she had dug around herself. He laid down on his back with her across his chest and nuzzled his mandibles against her hair. The sensation of them moving across her scalp coupled with his claws gently dragging down her back felt delightful.

His purring vibrated through her face as she pressed her body against his. She wished she could just meld into him and hide there. Hide from everything and just stay where it was safe. Having him hold her and purring her into a stupor was just as good though.

"Are you angry at me?" She mumbled out quietly.

"H-ko. Why would I be angry at you?" Dae'er replied.

"Because of the experiments failing." She answered as she choked back tears.

A deep guttural rumble came from his chest. "I would never feel anger towards you about anything." His hand stilled on her back as the other lifted her chin to force her eyes to his. "The experiment not working yet is not of your doing. They are experiments, they are not guaranteed. If it is destined for you to carry my pup, then Paya will bless us. If not, then I am happy as we are. Burdening yourself with unnecessary guilt will do you no good, No'elia. Some things are just out of our claws." He lifted her hand and caressed it against his cheek. "Or hands." He trilled.

Dae'er was right, like always. The experiments were never guaranteed to work, it was only a chance to work and if it never happened then it didn't happen. That wasn't her fault. Dae'er not being angry at her or blaming her for her lack of conception was a huge weight off her shoulders. In fact, it made her feel like he really loved her and if he didn't blame her, there was no reason to blame herself.

Dae'er had gone back to petting her and purring up a storm. His eyes were closed but she could tell he wasn't asleep. She glided her hand slowly over his well defined pectoral and abs before teasing at the indentation that led to his malehood.

Her action intrigued him as his purring skipped for a moment. They had been mating so often here lately but she couldn't help but feel like he deserved a reward for making her feel better. She moved her hand back up his torso and began kissing along his thick dark skin, moving from his chest up to his neck then she licked along his fangs.

She let his tongue slip across her lips and explore the inside of her mouth. His taste was surprisingly sweet and she used her own tongue to massage his back. It must've pulled him completely from his little snooze as his sultry Yautja dai-shui washed over her senses. So heavy and spicy and it felt like a drug in her bloodstream, sending her mind into a montage of nothing but Dae'er.

Everything he did to her was intensified. The feel of his huge sain'ja hands caressing and massaging her tender human skin, the Yautja sounds that he emitted from that broad chest of his, his scent, his warmth, everything just sucked her deeper into an insatiable obsession for him. She wanted him, worse than she ever wanted him before. Hell, it wasn't a want..it was a need.

Dae'er must've been able to sense her growing arousal as his hands tightened on her hips. With a possessive growl, he moved them together so that she was now the one underneath. Erie arched her back, pressing her bare breasts against his chest and whimpered impatiently as she rubbed her legs against his thighs.

Dae'er rubbed the tip of his hard and thick malehood along her slit, coating himself in her before pressing inside of her. Pauk. She'd made love to him plenty of times but every time, the first initial thrust still made her let out a heavy moan. He went slowly, still getting her slickness all over himself before going faster and deeper.

His name escaped her lips on a quiet little moan as he sped up his pace and buried himself into her over and over again. His thick cock rubbed against her sensitive walls sending a flush of pleasure with each thrust. He took up every spare inch of her and with his movements, along with his scent, it didn't take long for her to peak and cum onto him. The wave was heavy and hard and the ripples of it seemed to last forever.

While she felt like she was floating, Dae'er was still grounded. With himself still deep inside of her, he moved into a sitting position with her legs straddled around his waist. She attempted to go to work on him but he immediately took control, lifting her hips up and down his long hard shaft repeatedly. His tip collided with the end of her canal but the pleasure was greater than the pain and she allowed him to continue to indulge himself in her warmth.

She wrapped one hand around some of his dreads causing a rough seductive growl to roll out of his throat. She tugged a little harder on his tube like hair and his head tilted upwards to let out a small roar. His claws imbedded into her skin and he shoved into her harder. At first she thought she had hurt him but when he protested to her letting go of his dreads, her hand shot back into the smooth strands.

Erie gripped them tight and gave another rough tug. He splayed open his mandibles as if he were angry and he moved her body faster and buried himself harder inside of her. She bit back a whimper as she kept her hold on his dreads and braced herself to keep from moving as he fucked her roughly for a while.

She felt his body getting more and more tense and he swiftly moved her on to her back again. He pressed into her hard, shoving himself as far back inside of her as he could and filled her up. He pumped a couple of a small thrusts then let out a triumphant like roar as he continued to cum inside of her. He had never came like that before. His entire body flinched as his obvious pleasure sent jolts throughout him.

When he finished, his chest was heaving and mandibles hung indolently. His entire body was exhausted! That had definitely not happened yet! Erie felt a sense of pride from getting her male to the point of exertion. This huge burly prince, the best sain'ja on Yautja Prime, exhausted from mating her. She made it her goal to get him to this point from now on.

He lifted her and rotated them again, back to their original position of her on his chest. She pressed her ear against his chest and heard his Yautja heart thumping rapidly against the side of her face. His hand began threading through her tangled hair, trying to free the knots as he petted.

“Are you satisfied?” She asked with a grin.

“Sei-i, you always satisfy me, No’elia.” He replied.

“But you feel more satisfied than usual?” She questioned, trying to pull out the answer she wanted to hear.

He trilled at her, obviously knowing what she was referring to. “Sei-i, this mating was very... satisfactory.” He purred out.

Erie went back to nuzzling her face against him, enjoying the moment of her conquering her prince. She may not be able to land a blow on him during training but in the bedroom, she was able to hit him precisely where it mattered.

She had just began to doze off when she felt Dae’er begin to pile the furs on top of her. It was annoying but it also felt amazing to feel so cared for, even if it was by an almost nine foot tall killing machine.

When No’elia had rolled off of him deep in sleep, Dae’er quietly moved out of the bed. Before their mating, he could sense her distress even without his biomask. Her vitals were off the charts for an ooman and it took all he had not to show his concern.

The repeated unsuccessful conceptions was getting to her. He could tell she wanted his pup just as badly as she wanted to succeed on the game preserve. Her want to please him was the same reason that caused her pain. She seemed content for the moment and he prayed to Paya that she got a nightmare free sleep, at least for several hours.

Dae’er exited his dwellings and headed for the kehrite. His destination was interrupted when he saw Talia snooping around his wing. Why was that horrid female here? What lies did she tell his mei’hswei so that she could sneak around? Whatever her purpose was, he was certain it would never be good enough to convince him she should be here.

He watched her inhale his h’dui’sē deeply, her mandibles splaying slightly at his heavy mating aftermath. She turned towards him and started up a seductive swagger. Dae’er gave off a warning growl but she was unmoved. She sauntered around him, flashing every curve

and body part a male Yautja would go hulij-bpe for but the only thing going through Dae'er's mind was how hulij-bpe she actually was.

"You disrespect my mei'hswei." Dae'er said firmly.

"You know I've always wanted you." She replied as she tried to touch his chest.

Dae'er grabbed a hold of her wrist and tightened his grip to a point where he knew it was painful. She groaned and hissed in protest but didn't struggle to get free.

"I'll never want you. Your actions at this current moment are beneath a future queen and will get you deemed a Bad Blood if you are not careful." Dae'er warned.

"How sweet of you to look after me." She purred and Dae'er shoved her away.

"I am looking out for my mei'hswei. Shame would come to him and our bloodline if his whore of a mate was cast out." Dae'er said as Talia went into defensive mode.

"My only crime would be caring for you." She moved close to him again and Dae'er tensed up with anger and aggravation. 'Let me carry your pup.' She whispered. "Let me give you what that ooman never can."

Her words had Dae'er's thwei boiling and he had just about enough of this disrespectful, worthless female. He extended his dah'kte and backed her into the wall. The tips of his blades pressed against her bare stomach on the verge of piercing her hide. Her h'dlak flooded his senses. Good. She was finally getting the point.

"Why are you here? You come to insult my mate and yours or is there actually a purpose to your intrusion?" Dae'er's voice was serious and if he didn't like what she had to say, then he'd certainly show her.

"I thought maybe you had spare ooman awu'asa that I could have for my little slave." Talia's voice sounded unmoved by his dah'kte on the verge of breaking skin but her h'dui'se gave her away.

"My mei'hswei is wealthy enough to afford awu'asa. Why don't you have some made?" Dae'er questioned.

"Your mei'hswei doesn't think she needs it. Call me sentimental but I'd rather not watch my sire's gift to me get blown to pieces." Her words had Dae'er narrowing his deknas at her in disbelief.

He didn't believe her for one second but he honestly didn't want the same thing to occur. It also reminded him that he had yet to tell No'elia of Seleana's attendance to the game preserve. At least with awu'asa, No'elia might have a better chance of protecting her friend. He retracted his dah'kte and strode into his kehrite.

"If you cared for the female, then why send her to begin with?" Dae'er asked as he opened a panel to reveal some of No'elia's old awu'asa.

Talia was quiet as he retrieved several pieces and handed them to her. Probably thinking of a lie or some other unbelievable response. Her judgment day would come, he only hoped he was there to witness it.

“It may have been my idea but it pleased your mei’hswei greatly. Besides, if your little ooman can do it, why not mine?” She sneered as she dropped the awu’asa into the netted bag Dae’er held out for her.

“My mate has been trained. She has an entire year of experience and has passed her chiva. She is worthy of the kv’var and has a great chance of succeeding while your companion has a great chance of perishing.” He tightened the string on the bag before tossing it roughly at Talia to catch. “It may please my mei’hswei but you are spitting in the face of your father.”

“I’d rather please a future tyrant than respect the bastard that abandoned me.” She spat out as she turned to leave.

Dae’er grabbed her by her bicep and gripped her tight. “Watch your tongue and remember your position. Everything you have now is because of both of those males and can be taken away just as easily as it was given.”

She rotated her arm and yanked away from his hold. She shot him a mocking glare before exiting his kehrite. That female was destined to fail. Her lack of care and appreciation was an aberration and one day, someone else will notice it and will do more than threaten to kill her. When that day came, not even his mei’hswei could help her.

Dae’er summoned in several River Ghosts and trained some as he tried to figure out how to tell No’elia of her friend’s fate. No matter which presentation he thought of, the result was still the same. No’elia would protest and become upset. Her stress would raise again and this time, there was no way for him to alleviate it. He’d have to narrow down which way was the best for No’elia’s sake.

Chapter 19

Chapter 19! Enjoy!

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Dae'er had his hand on the back of her neck like he used to do. She knew it was because he was nervous and not out of dominance. He wouldn't say it outloud but she knew, she knew he was as scared as she was. They approached a massive ship with a large crowd gathered around the outside of it.

She recognized some of the Yautja that were geared to the teeth but the others, she had no clue who they were. The sound of snarling and growling drew her attention. Several hounds were being loaded into the cargo hold and one of the unfamiliar Yautja were shouting at the workers handling the cages.

Dae'er had told her about the different specializations the Blooded and Elites chose. Some were close combatants like her, while others would use guns or hounds. Dae'er pulled them to a stop and removed his bio mask to speak to her.

"I can not go this time, No'elia." Erie already knew that, he had told her several times now. 'I will watch you from here.' Dae'er was obviously holding back. He either didn't want to scare her or was trying to keep up appearances. He laid his huge palm against her cheek. "You can do this. Just stay focused and alert and you will survive." He made a growling sound then pulled her into his body for a hug.

"I won't let you down." She said as she hugged him tightly. "I won't let anyone down." She said speaking of her new people.

She pulled away from Dae'er and his hand ran along her hair as she moved closer to the ship's doors. Her comrades chuffed as she walked by them and when she reached the top of the ramp she turned to face Dae'er. He stared at her then gave her the honorary salute. She repeated the action and the other Yautja boarded with the door closing behind them.

Her heart felt like it was in her throat as soon as Dae'er was closed off from her. She turned around and her eyes skimmed over the supplies and weapons as everything began to spin. She gasped in air and the hound Yautja watched her in curiosity. By the look on his face, She guessed Yautja didn't get panic attacks. The area around her felt like it was closing it, swirling around her in a blur of darkness. Crap, maybe she couldn't do this.

She opened the panel beside the door and began punching in the code to open it when the hound Yautja stepped forward to stop her. "Between you and I," he trilled. "H'dlak will be the last thing you will need to worry about if you open that door."

"What?" She strained. 'You'll kill me?' She panted. "I'd like to see you try."

“I won’t have to do anything. The hundreds of thousands of Yautja watching you run away from your duty will do more than any blade can do.” He turned on his heel and headed for the cock pit.

Pauk, he was right. She had to get it together. She wasn’t just doing this for her and Dae’er, she was doing it for every Yautja as well. Proof that she was worthy of the position she had. Proof that she was an excellent princess and deserved the title and not just some ooman that was handed power. She inhaled slowly through her nostrils and exhaled through her mouth.

She headed into the cockpit and took the empty seat that was left. Once the seat strapped her in, the Yautja in the driver’s seat began to set the ship into motion. This was bigger than her chiva, bigger than anything she had done so far. This was going to decide whether or not she got to stay with Dae’er.

She lifted her hands and looked at the gear that adorned her forearms. How did she go from a regular person with a regular career and life to a monster killing assassin princess? Somebody had definitely reshuffled her deck and dealt her a whole new set of cards, that was for sure.

The ship rumbled and the covering on the windshield closed, causing a red light to illuminate the darkness. It was far too late to turn back now, not that she could anyway. She looked around at the Yautja beside her. Five including her. Wait..there were six. She barely got a glance at the sixth member before it went completely dark. She quickly fumbled with her bio mask to put it on.

It lit up and identified the sixth member of the brigade as an ooman. Her mouth parted as she recognized the unranked non lethal target her bio mask was registering the ooman as. It couldn’t be. Seleana wasn’t a warrior, she never even had training. Her friend was in a set of her old piss poor armor and didn’t even have a bio mask. Her whimpering was making the Yautja next to her bristle in aggravation.

What the hell was she doing on this ship? Was this a joke? A cruel terrible play at her for having to go through this ridiculous challenge? The vertigo feeling wrenched at her gut and when it was over, the sound of Seleana vomiting could be heard through the darkness. Erie remembered her first time riding a jump. At least she wasn’t in an important position like Seleana was now when she puked up dinner.

The ship shifted and the darkness was instantly swallowed by a massive green and blue planet. Erie stared over at her friend that was sobbing hysterically now and covered in bile.

“Seleana?” Erie asked and her friend’s eyes shot up from the floor to look at her.

“Erie. Why is this happening to me?” She questioned over and over again in different tones.

When the ship stopped and her seat unfastened, she jumped up and dashed over to Seleana. “What are you doing here?” Erie questioned as she put an arm around her.

“I don’t know. I can’t understand them like you can. I only know bits and pieces but Talia said it was a way to get back at your master.” She weeped. She grabbed ahold of Erie’s shirt and yanked on her. “I don’t want to be here. I don’t want to die!” She cried.

"It's alright, Seleana, just stay with me." Erie said and the hound Yautja chuffed. "it'll be alright."

She knew what he was thinking. She'd certainly flounder with Seleana with her. She couldn't stealth or defend herself, she'd be dead weight to Erie but there was no way she was going to leave her alone. She wrapped her hand around Seleana's and escorted her out of the ship.

"We don't have long to set up, the the prey will be dropped soon." The commander of the ship said as he headed to the back and helped unload the hounds.

"What?" Seleana asked shakily.

"The hunt is about to begin." Erie replied.

Her friend began to shift around and back away from her. "I can't do this." Seleana said. "I can't hunt or fight. I'll die. I'm going to die!" She shouted as she bolted out of the camp and into the forest.

"Good riddance." One of the Yautja said and the others trilled in agreement.

Erie sighed and adjusted her plasma caster sheath before dashing after Seleana. Seleana could just hide until it was over, maybe her running off wouldn't be that bad. Staying out of the way was better than Erie having to watch her back and Seleana's.

She tracked Seleana's footsteps to a small, very small, cave. It was only big enough for one person and signs that someone, Seleana probably, had dug some of it out to make more room. Erie kneeled down and leaned over to look under the massive rock that covered the opening.

"Seleana?" Erie called out into the hole. "Are you in there?"

She stopped and listened and barely made out slight sniffing from inside the hole. She was definitely in there.

"If you can hear me, answer me." Erie said louder.

"I'm in here." Seleana said.

"This cave is pretty well hidden. If you stay in here, you should be safe." Erie pulled out one of her daggers from her leg guard and tossed it into the hole. 'Here. If anyone comes, you can use this. I'll come back for you once most of the prey have been hunted. Just don't leave, okay?' Erie said as she waited a few moments for a reply. "Seleana?"

"I won't go anywhere." Seleana replied and Erie saw her hand reach out and take the dagger she gave her.

Erie covered the hole with brush and leaves to hide it better then she went to work on their tracks and even led some away from the hole. Seleana should be fine as long as she doesn't leave. Erie scaled one of the massive tree trunks and looked around.

The first of the prey drops were arriving. She recalled what Dae'er had told her. Boxes were River Ghosts, parachutes were oomans and cages were Bad Bloods. So far, from her

view, all she could see were several parachutes and a couple of boxes. Most of the parachutes landed out to the East of the camp and the boxes were more west.

Dae'er told her to take care of River Ghosts first and then the oomans. The other Yautja that were with her were probably on their way already. She looked down at Seleana's hole and saw that the brush she used was strung out all over the place. Pauk. Really Seleana?

Erie didn't have time to chase her around. She would just have to survive on her own for a little while since she didn't want to listen to Erie. She climbed down from the tree top then jumped to the forest floor. She sprinted off to the west, turning on her cloaking device.

She had practiced an entire month worth of free time on perfecting her cloaking. She could activate it in mid run or fall and even while multitasking, all instant and with no delay. Dae'er had said that most Yautja didn't even bother with perfecting and focused more on training and strength but to her, the cloaking device was as important as any weapon.

The sound of the hounds was getting closer and she scaled a tree to watch. Ooman gunfire echoed through the forest and the whines and whimpers of the dogs followed it. An ooman female cried out and Erie moved closer to the group. She was amazed at how quickly the oomans moved. She was sure the hound Yautja was sending his dogs in to test their strength.

She was close enough for her bio mask to show her what was happening without getting right on top of them. She zoomed in and counted at least seven oomans. They were all carrying heavy weapons like firearms and one even had grenades. The wounded woman was in military garb and was wearing a bulletproof vest. The wound on her leg was fatal, the hounds had severed an artery and she'd already lost a massive amount of blood.

One man, who seemed to be their appointed leader, was discussing leaving her to another man. The leaves rustled behind her and she extended her wrist blades and turned to strike. She retracted them when she saw one of her comrades.

"You almost lost your head." She whispered.

"Are you going to strike?" He asked.

"H-ko. There are too many and they are already on high alert. Going in would be suicide." She said as she headed through the trees to go around the oomans. "I'm going for the River Ghosts first. They'll be at an advantage when the sun sets but the oomans will be vulnerable so that's when we will strike, well, I will anyway."

The male chuffed at her, a mocking reaction to her plan but oh well, pauk him. It was every Yautja for himself and if that fool wanted to charge in like the fool he was, then it was his problem. She stuck to Dae'er's advice, he had completed this little ceremony several times and he definitely knew more than that smart ass Yautja snickering at her.

She followed the tracks from one of the crates to a river. She set up her first trap near the bank in case they returned for more water. She followed the tracks again, this time they stopped in the middle of a clearing. Dae'er had told her that River Ghosts were masters of camouflage, their skin resembled tree bark so greatly that they could easily blend in with the sort of scenery this planet had.

The wind shifted and Erie looked around suspiciously, listening and watching for any sign of disturbance to the nature around her. Her bio mask wasn't picking anything up but she

could sense she was being watched even through her cloaking device. The wind blew through the tall amber colored grass and she heard the slight shifting of the ground behind her, an indication that whatever was watching was now coming up behind her.

She squatted down and pretended like she was examining tracks while watching her shadow become two. As soon as she heard the skittering of the insects that roamed her stalker's skin, she extended her wrist blades and blocked a blow from above. She swiped her leg around and knocked the River Ghost onto his back.

She quickly drew her dagger and went to drive it through the hissing River Ghost when it hit her firmly in the ribs with its fist. The bones crunched and while she was stunned, it rolled out from beneath her and scrambled for its weapon. She quickly slammed the dagger through its ankle, pinning it to the ground. She stood up and extended her wrist blades.

The River Ghost emitted a screeching noise that reminded her of the same sound a bat makes. It hissed some more and flared its jaws wide in warning but she disregarded it. She had tracked it, wounded it and now had it pinned. She drove her two silver blades tight through the middle of its back then she dragged it upwards until she felt the metal collide with bone.

She retracted her wrist blades and the creature's black blood gushed from its wound. Pain shot through her side and she grunted from the discomfort. Pauk. She had only just begun and she already had an injury. Her body combined with her mi flower usually took an entire day to fully heal a broken bone. She couldn't wait that long to finish her mission and there was no telling how the other Yautja were fairing.

She sucked in a hard breath as she forced herself to stand up straight. She wondered if Dae'er was watching her right now and what he was thinking. His stress had probably quadrupled now. She needed to head back to the camp and find something to reduce her pain.

She cloaked and moved as fast as she could through the forest. On her way she heard the oomans again but she couldn't scale a tree with her busted ribs. She just had to hide and wait for them to pass. She stood behind a massive tree trunk and watched them go by.

With the female that bled out, there was nothing but males left. Most were military men but there were also a couple in beige, prisoners she guessed and one in a pair of sweatpants and a white t-shirt. He had a medical bracelet around his wrist as well. Maybe a mental patient? She counted five males which meant there was one missing. Coming up the rear, a straggler. A short and scrawny young male in his late teens wearing normal clothes.

Her bio mask adjusted and identified his threat as lethal. Her mask circled his pocket and brought up a pair of brass knuckles, then it showed several huge pipe bombs in his backpack. He was pretty far behind, maybe she could pick him off before his company realized he was missing.

She drew her dagger and positioned it to throw but she had another idea. She drew the rope wire from her belt and quickly made a noose out of it. Right as the male walked by her tree, she stepped out and slipped the noose around his neck and tightened it. She then yanked hard on the wire and wrapped it around the tree trunk several times, pinning the male against the tree tightly.

The male couldn't scream from the pressure on his vocal chords but he certainly put up a fight. She wrapped the rope wire around the tree trunk one last time before she tied it tightly then severed it from her belt. She watched him writhe and wriggle for a while until he finally stilled. The sound of his friends coming meant it was time for her to go. She walked quickly in the direction of the camp. She had successfully killed two prey and she was certain anyone watching was impressed. She did just take out a lethal ooman with a busted rib cage.

She reached the ship and saw that her comrades had strung up a couple of dead River Ghosts. Their guts were hanging out and their black blood had started a nice little pool underneath each one. She bypassed the carcasses and climbed the ramp to the ship. She slammed on the button from the cargo hold where the hounds were growling and snarling at her and she entered into the corridor of the ship.

She opened the medic room, if it could be called that since it was the size of a closet. She eyed over the contents of vials and bottles until she found a wad of bandage. She had used this bandage often after training to keep broken bones in place but now she was going to wrap it around her rib cage in hopes of keeping herself from moving too much.

She spread the four inch thick spandex like material and wrapped it around her three times. She cried out in pain when it tightened against her busted ribs. She frantically turned and rummaged through the first aid stuff until she found a pain reliever. She loaded the vial into the syringe gun then fired it off through the bandage. The pain instantly melted and she leaned back against the wall, letting the gun fall to the floor.

Damn, she should've done that first. She picked up the gun and grabbed two more vials of pain killer and tucked them in the spot where she usually kept her bio mask. The pain killer should last quite a while but she didn't want to take any chances. The stuff completely numbed out the pain and she could move like she wasn't even hurt.

As she headed out of the ship the sound of gunfire echoed through the forest again. She looked over at the hounds and they barked and snapped their jaws at her. The oomans must've been shooting at something else, a careless Yautja probably. She climbed a tree and headed for the source.

The oomans had traveled quite a ways. They were headed for high ground on top of a tree covered hill which would make it hard for her and her acquaintances to stalk them. She slowed when she got close enough to hear them and scanned to see what they were firing at.

From her view in the tree, her bio mask was picking up two of her fellow Yautja's and the oomans were aware of being stalked. Every bit of movement they unloaded on.

"Those fucking things are hunting us like animals!" One of the men in the beige get up was shouting.

"We need to remain calm. They can obviously hear us and can see us." The leader replied.

"Well no shit they're fucking monsters!" The other beige exclaimed.

"They can't get to us from here. We'd be able to see them if they got close." The leader knew what he was doing. He seemed to be much more relaxed than his companions.

She moved to another branch. "So what's the plan? We stay here all night with those assholes watching us?" Beige number one asked.

“We set up a perimeter. Have eyes on every direction. If we can keep them on their toes, we can stay alive.” The leader replied.

The mental patient all of sudden went crazy and unleashed his pent up aggravation on the leader.

“We can’t stay here! They’ll kill us, pick us off one by one until no one is left! We can’t stay here! We can’t stay here!” The mental patient picked up a boulder and lifted it to slam into the leader’s head.

Erie watched in curiosity as one of her fellow Yautja bristled with anticipation. He was dying to strike now while they were distracted. She knew that even though they were fighting each other that their position would still be at an advantage for any offensive attack she did. She eyed the antsy Yautja and he stared at her. She shook her head but it was no use, he dropped from his perch and stirred up a bunch of loose foliage.

The sudden abnormal change in the surroundings stopped the oomans bickering and they all looked in the direction of where the Yautja was stalking from. What a fool. Erie couldn’t intervene, she’d most certainly die with him.

Just as she thought, the two convicts became unstable and unloaded their weapon on the Yautja, the rest of the oomans followed suit. The small pistols missed but the automatic weapon hit several times over and over again. The Yautja’s neon green blood splattered across the forest floor and the tree trunks. His cloaking device dropped when his body did and Erie watched the Yautja’s lungs fill with fluid as the oomans approached him.

“Ugly son of a bitch.” One of the beiges said as he drove his toe into the dead Yautja’s ribs.

“That’s two down.” The leader said as he began rummaging through the dead Yautja’s belongings.

Two? They must’ve killed another Yautja somewhere else. She couldn’t check her wrist computer right now to see the locations of everyone and confirm as they would certainly see her. So there were four left, including her and Seleana, and five oomans. She definitely overestimated the Yautja’s. Maybe they were severely undertrained or something. Dae’er had told her not to run in all crazy like the Yautja that just got pumped full of bullet holes did.

As she climbed down the tree, she heard someone scream off in the distance. It was a female and she had witnessed the ooman prey female die herself which meant it had to be Seleana. She dropped the rest of the way down the tree trunk and landed quietly.

The oomans heard it too and had perked up and began discussing whether or not they should go investigate. Pauk! She had to get to Seleana before they did. She was already deathly afraid of her situation and the oomans finding her would certainly cause her more trouble.

Erie sprinted in the direction of Seleana’s scream, opening her wrist computer to check the status of her comrades. The oomans were right, it showed two dots completely still but the one closest to her was certainly alive. She guessed it was Seleana as she moved through the dense jungle. The whole place was like a freaking maze, she was surprised anyone got through it.

Seleana's dot was moving but not very far, in fact, she just kept going in circles. She must've been stuck in something. As Erie came right up on Seleana she saw exactly what she was stuck in. She almost lost her footing as she stepped on the edge of a massive hole filled with spiked tree limbs.

Erie quickly scaled the tree next to her to avoid falling in from her misstep. She perched on the lowest branch and searched the pit for Seleana. It didn't take long to see her friend trying to scramble out the sides. She'd move from one side to the next completing a full circle as she did.

She was crying hysterically and shouting for help. Erie saw another Yautja approaching the opposite side of Seleana. He saw her struggling to get out and he scoffed.

"An ooman caught in an ooman made trap." He squatted down. "Why should we help you, little slave?" He questioned as he shoved a massive pile of mud down onto her.

"Please, I don't want to die." Seleana begged and the Yautja laughed at her.

"Is she not your friend? Ask her why she watches you claw at the dirt like a writhing worm instead of assisting you." He pointed at Erie's direction and she uncloaked so Seleana could see her.

She quickly moved around the spikes along the pit wall to where Erie was perched at and held out her hand. She couldn't get down there safely without falling in herself.

"I have to move to the other side, the walls here are too steep." Erie said as she leaped from the branch to the side of the pit that wasn't made out of mud and Seleana followed her. She held her hand up for Erie to grab it.

"They're here. You don't have time to save her. The ground is too moist and her weight would pull you in. Leave her." The Yautja said as he bolted up a tree.

Pauk, the oomans were here and the mud was too deep. She stared down at her friend's face with regret and Seleana realized what had to happen. Her expression turned to worry and panic.

"I'll come for you." Erie said quietly. "I'll get you I promise!" She whispered as she cloaked and climbed a tree to watch.

The oomans approached the pit cautiously and Seleana quieted. Erie watched as the leader gave military gestures to cover his back while him and another peeked into the pit. His companions nodded and they approached the side slowly, weapons ready to fire.

When they reached the side, Seleana scrambled around to the opposite end. They lowered their weapons when they saw her, assuming she was just a lost one of them.

"It's just a woman." One of the prisoners said. "A nice looking woman too." He added and the other prisoner gave him a friendly arm jab.

Erie's grip on the tree trunk tightened. She really hoped she wouldn't have to interfere right now but if they so much as glanced at her like they would harm her, she'd have no choice.

The leader gestured for a rope hanging over one of the other military man's shoulder then he lowered it into the pit. All five men used their bodies to hold Seleana's weight so they

could pull her out. As soon as she was free, Seleana made a run for it.

Erie followed her through the trees, watching as the oomans chased after her. Erie shifted her eyes from Seleana to her chasers. The mental patient was in the rear and Erie took it as an opportunity to lower their numbers.

She slowed, allowing the other oomans to chase Seleana while she stalked their friend. She had to be quick as he wasn't too far from them. If he screamed, they'd certainly notice. A kill from above was the only option.

She slowed even more and drew her dagger. When he passed below her she leaped off the edge of the limb and brought the dagger straight down onto his back. She shoved his face into the wet foliage to muffle his screams as she drove her dagger over and over into the side of his neck, ripping through tendons and muscle with ease. When his body stilled, she bolted back up a tree, turning her cloaking device back on.

The other oomans didn't notice as she had hoped. They kept chasing Seleana and she kept shouting out for Erie. The leader was catching up before Erie could and he tackled Seleana to the ground.

Erie stopped and watched Seleana put a feeble fight. She was so ill prepared for this and it didn't take much for the huge man to subdue her. The others gathered around as the leader picked up a flailing Seleana.

"Erie!" Seleana screamed.

The leader jerked her to keep her still. "Who are you screaming for? You have a friend somewhere?" He asked.

"They're probably dead." A prisoner asked.

"Unlikely since she's the one that's been killing you assholes." Seleana spat.

"You're with those monsters?" The second prisoner asked pointing his gun at her and using his hand to point out into the forest.

"No, just one of them." She replied through bared teeth.

"And it's a girl? A girl monster? You're telling me that I'm being hunted by a bitch?" The second prisoner seemed all agitated by the fact a woman had killed his friends.

"Wait." The second military man said. "Where's the nut job?" He asked as he looked around.

They all knew what happened to him and they all shifted uncomfortably. The leader still had a violent hold on Seleana.

The second prisoner began shouting obscenities and kicking up twigs and dirt. "How the fuck are we being outsmarted by a god damn woman?" He rushed at Seleana and got really close to her face. "I used to rape bitches like you for fun. When I find your little monster friend, I'm going to rape you right in front of her then I'm going to pull her fucking entrails out while you watch." He threatened.

Erie was going to have a hayday with this guy. To hell with quick and fast, he was certainly going to feel all of her training. She'd make sure to leave him for last.

"That's enough." The leader said pulling Seleana away from the prisoner's creepy glare. "Regardless of what gender whatever is hunting us is, we still don't need to take them lightly. We have their friend, perhaps they'd make a negotiation." The leader said.

"Yeah a negotiation with my gun." The first prisoner said.

"They're probably watching us right now and every thing you say is being noted. I just hope you realize that." The leader said.

"Oh, she's watching and I'm sure she's probably saving you for last." Seleana said to the prisoner that threatened her.

Erie had to figure out how to safely get Seleana back without being killed herself. She wondered what Dae'er would do. He'd probably wait until dark then kill every one of these assholes. She had no problems so far picking them off and this whole time she thought this place was going to be ridiculously hard. So far, it was turning out to be easier than her chiva.

The sun was setting and the oomans were gathering wood in pairs. One guy held the gun while the other collected, leaving two back with Seleana. She could easily handle two but the ones gathering never strayed far, They always remained within shooting range.

The last few rays of light were flickering away as the humans got the fire roaring. The rope they used to pull Seleana out was now being used to restrain her. If only she had listened to her she wouldn't be here right now.

Erie leaned more against the tree and a jolt of pain shot out from her midsection. Pauk, her rib still hadn't healed much. She moved to a tree away from the humans view and pulled out the syringe gun.

She loaded the vial into the barrel but before firing it off, she unwrapped the bandage to see if it had healed at all. She'd be in big trouble if it wasn't, either something was wrong with her flower or something was wrong with her.

A throbbing pain immediately immersed as soon as the tightness of the wrap was removed. She tried to move a little and searing agony wrenched on her body. Something was definitely not right.

Before she could fire off the syringe gun, rapid movement in another tree caught her attention. She tried to scan the area but it was too late. A huge brute force tackled her and sent her sailing to the forest floor.

It was over a twenty foot drop and her rib injury made it so she couldn't move around to land on her feet so she landed on her back and the wind was sucked from her lungs like a vacuum. She was too stunned from the pain of her busted rib to notice what had tackled her. She crawled on her hands and knees while she fumbled around in the leaves for the syringe gun. Whatever just decided to ruin her day better hope she didn't find the thing.

Her biomask was scanning the ground just as furiously as she was rummaging. The familiar sound of a River Ghost's chirping alerted her biomask. A pauking River Ghost just

all body tackled her out of a tree. She was going to gut this dickhead and make a helmet out of his paiking skull but first she needed drugs.

She looked around, scanning the leaves, nothing. C’jit, she was going to have to do this the hard way. She struggled to her feet and drew her dagger. As long as she remained a little bent, the pain was semi tolerable.

This River Ghost was unlike any she had fought in the training room back home. The River Ghosts Dae’er summoned up had long claws and small wing like protrusions while this one’s claws were more like hands and its protrusions were huge. The crown of its head was broader as well. It looked much more intelligent and much more stronger than those she had killed before.

The sound of its bat like screeching and the clicking sound of its disgusting roaches was annoying as hell. She just wanted to kill the ugly asshole and move on.

“Come on, you bastard, you going to stand there and stink or finish what you started?” She taunted.

Almost like it understood her, it let out a guttural gurgling roar then charged at her. It pulled out two circle blades that were the size of a car tire and was spinning them like hula hoops in his hands. What the hell? She’d never seen this kind of weapon before, not even on Dae’er’s trophy rack. What a time to be crippled.

The circle blades were fast as he took swing after swing at her. She was barely missing the blows and the sound of the metal buzzing in her ear was giving her the chills. So far she was on defense as she struggled with her injury to keep from being split open.

Pauk, she couldn’t keep this up forever and this guy didn’t seem like he was getting tired. She had to make a move and it was going to hurt like a bitch. On his next swing, Erie dashed for a tree trunk and scaled it halfway to do a drop in attack. He was quick though and tossed one of his blades like a disc, interrupting her attack and causing her to tuck and roll to miss his.

Like a boomerang, the weapon came back and he went back to circling them in his hands. This was going to be harder than she thought and twice as hard as that since she was wounded.

If she can’t go over maybe she can go under. She sprang up from the ground and used all of her strength to run, ignoring the mind numbing pain from her rib. The River Ghost chucked one of his weapons but she knew it was coming and dropped to a slide. More pain. The blade embedded itself into the dirt as she went perfectly through the River Ghost’s long legs.

She caught herself and used her dagger like an ice pick as she jabbed it into his back and climbed his body like a mountain side. He struggled to grab at her and spun around frantically to get at her. She was far too small and far too quick and his own wings gave her protection from his blows. In a last effort, he brought his second blade over his head to try and hit her but she stuck her arm through the middle and yanked it out of his hand. He was hers now.

She wrapped her leg around his chest and used her sharp blade to slice his throat wide open. Black blood shot out and sprayed like an unmanned water hose. It clawed at her legs

and arms but his strength slowly faded away which each gush of blood he lost.

She rode his body to the ground then rolled off of him to lay beside him. His rapidly breathing body stilled as his squinty eyes gazed at her. She made a note to retrieve those circle blades and her new helmet later.

As she laid on her back looking up at the night sky, her bio mask went off. It focused and zoomed in on the syringe gun, stuck up in the tree where she was trying to use it earlier. She smirked and couldn't help but laugh. Of course, that was her luck wasn't it?

The pain in her ribs was constant now and the broken piece had to be jamming itself into her lung as it now hurt to breathe. She needed to go to a medical bay and have a machine repair her but she couldn't leave. There was no telling where the other Yautja were and if he didn't succeed then she'd be screwed. Dae'er told her that they would keep funneling in enemies until they were all terminated at once and she definitely couldn't survive another round. Hell she wasn't sure she was going to survive this one.

She went to sit up and cried out in pain then immediately laid back down. Pauk. She wasn't getting up, she had burned out the last bit of her resistance killing the River Ghost. She had to try, she had to get up. She couldn't just lay here, there were probably thousands upon thousands of Yautja watching her right now and she wasn't about to puss out in the final round.

She slowly turned over onto her belly and tears flowed from her eyes as she sobbed loudly. This was the worst pain she'd ever felt in her entire life. She drove her dagger into the tree and used it to pull herself up. Dae'er was probably cursing under his breath about dulling the blade but pauk, what else could she do?

Slowly but surely she made her way to the branch. Now she had to inch her way over to the edge and get the gun. Just as she reached out and grabbed it, the sound of the oomans were getting closer. They'd apparently heard her or the fight between her and the River Ghost and came to investigate together. What a bunch of idiots.

She pressed the syringe into the spot where the busted rib was and fired it off. Instant relief but her body was well beyond exhausted. Her head was spinning and her vision was blurring. Her grasp on the tree branch weakened and her body swayed. First the syringe gun slipped from her hand, causing the humans to look up at her, then her body followed suit.

She dropped like a sack of potatoes, for the second time, out of the same tree. This time her fall was cushioned by a person. This was definitely not what she needed right now. Definitely not where she wanted to be.

The last thing she saw before her weak body gave out on her was the face of the human leader as he looked down at her in his arms. Pauk, now how the hell was she supposed to get out of this mess?

Chapter 20

I hope everyone's had a wonderful day so far! Thank you for all the reviews and new favorites! You guys are the best. I have a few chapters to post today so I hope you enjoy them!

Thank you for choosing Devotion!

Disclaimer: I do not own Predator, Alien or any character pertaining to the AVP franchise!

The sight of No'elia in that ooman male's arms had Dae'er in a fury. They were going to kill her, torture her, do Paya knows what to her. He was pacing back and forth in front of his sire, his mei'hswei and Talia. No'elia was out cold but her biomask still ran a feed. The oomans were carrying her back to their camp while discussing what to do with her.

The two males in gray wanted to kill her while she slept but the leader was heavily objecting it. What he wouldn't give to be there right now. He'd slaughter every single one of them, twice. She'd done so well against the River Ghost commander and it was all for not when she landed in the arms of that ooman.

He growled and stopped to stare at the screen. "Wake up, No'elia!"

"My son, you need to calm down." His father said.

"How can I be calm when my mate is in the hands of the enemy? This is your doing!" He shouted at his father. "And yours! She wouldn't be there right now if you hadn't deployed your ooman slave onto kv'varing grounds! If she dies, you die!" He threatened at his mei'hswei and several guards shifted from their spots to react.

His father quickly stopped them as he stood from his seat. "Calm yourself, son, the oomans obviously won't kill her since she is one of them. They are more interested in asking questions than killing. If you'd stop and listen you'd know that." His father gestured at the screen.

Dae'er couldn't take this, it was nerve wracking, mind melting and he'd never felt so helpless in his life. He stepped closer to the screen. This was his mate, his life and his soul in the hands of unpredictable forces. If something happened to her, if she died, his family would be the first to feel his wrath, that was a guarantee. A male that loses his mate before his time was something to not take lightly. They became a Yautja killing machine, slaughtering whatever happened to be in the way and why not? What else did they have to lose?

A servant approached him with a tray of food and he knocked it from the male's hands. The servant cowered away and his father shouted at him.

"I told you, Dae'er, if I could've stopped this, I would've but it is no longer in my claws. Decisions like that are up to the Ancients. Confront them if you like but I doubt you will

receive much h'chak from them." His father said as he sat back in his throne and tightened his hand around the hilt of one of his al'nagaras.

"Those old fools wouldn't grant their own young h'chak if they were bleeding out in front of them! This situation wouldn't be where it is now if it weren't for everyone in this room, myself included." He turned to head for the exit. 'However, if she meets Cetanu this day,' He stopped a moment. "The repercussions of that situation will be out of *my* claws." He snarled as he continued out.

He didn't want to leave the feed from No'elia's mask but he had to try something to save her or at least interfere in some way. He still agreed with his previous comment on the Ancients but they were his only chance to save No'elia.

He headed for the room where a few of them were gathered to watch his female fight. The whole situation had gathered quite a crowd and he was certain every Yautja on the planet was watching right now. The guards at the door stopped him and as soon as he made a commotion, one the Ancients granted him entrance.

"Prince Dae'er, I believe it's safe to say that you are here on account of your ooman." The oldest of the Ancients was Otho, a scrawny Yautja that barely fit in his awu'asa.

"Allow me to retrieve her. She has proven herself more than worthy of being a Yautja ju'ha." Dae'er stated.

"Has she? She killed oomans, kainde amedha and River Ghosts but does that make her worthy of such a high position amongst our kind?" Otho replied and the others grunted in approval.

"She's killed a River Ghost commander, that's more than any Elite alive today can say! You deny her her rightfully earned title out of what? Prejudice? Biggotism? By your own ancient laws, she is a ju'ha of the Yautja, she shouldn't even be at the game preserve!" Dae'er shouted out, running out of patience with these old fools.

"So our best has trained her to be a killing machine then she mates our prince and that makes her a leader? A leader is more than just brute thar'n-dha, that is why you young ones take thousands of years to understand what we do now." Otho stood from his chair. "Killing creature after creature makes her a good sain'ja but does she have the heart to lead a race of them?" He said as he pointed at the feed behind Dae'er.

Dae'er turned to see No'elia begin to stir from her pain induced unconsciousness. He was unsure what the Ancient was referring to. No'elia had more heart than any Yautja he knew. Her heart was full of compassion, generosity and benevolence. He froze in realization. Her heart wasn't Yautja at all. It was still ooman. It was because of her kind heart that she wouldn't be a good leader for Yautja. The Ancient wasn't referring to a pyode heart but a hardened one.

The oomans that could have easily slaughtered her were still her prey. They were still the game she needed to kv'var, even if they were providing her with shelter and h'chak. If she could slice open the throat of the very ooman that stood between her and thei-de, he was certain the Ancients wouldn't object to allowing him to fetch her. It was the moment they were waiting for, the moment everyone on his planet was needing to see.

Like the devoted male he was, he'd been worried about her well being and had put her real objective on the back burner. It wasn't a good honorable Yautja that lead his people, it was a calloused sain'ja. His grandfather had tested Dae'er's father by taking the ooman female from him and the result was a natural king with a heart made of steel. So much so that his own offspring felt nothing from him but his cold hard stare and his brutal unjust judgements.

No'elia needed to prove that she no longer had an ooman heart but that of an Yautja beating in her chest. Only then will she be fully accepted into his race and only then will she have the respect she so rightfully deserves.

He looked back at Otho with understanding deknas and the Ancient nodded at him as he took his seat again. Otho somehow knew that Dae'er had gotten the message and the tenseness in the air suddenly disappeared.

"If she proves her worth, you have our permission to retrieve her. You are dismissed." The Ancient said and two guards came to escort him out.

He rushed back to his father an understanding male. He knew what his mate had to do, what she must do. Dae'er motioned for his servant and he flocked to his side.

"Ready my ship for departure." Dae'er instructed and the male nodded at him before leaving.

"I know the Ancients aren't going to allow you to get her." His mei-hswei sneered.

Dae'er ignored him and shot a glance at his father who nodded. He didn't need to explain his situation to anyone. He had confidence that No'elia would fulfill her purpose and when she did, he wanted to be ready to go and fetch her. He knew his sainja, he knew his mate, she would do it and when she did, she'd finally get recognized for what he knew her as. All he had to do now, was watch and wait.

Erie was awake but she kept her eyes closed. The sound of people talking, human people, had her on high alert. She recalled what happened and judging by the sound of the fire crackling, it hadn't been too long since she fell out of the tree..again.

How was she going to get out of this? There was no way they were going to sleep with her still here. Especially not since Seleana told them she was the one that had been killing them. C'jit.

She had thought about just jumping up and trying her hand at massacring them but they still had weapons and it was three or more firearms against just one of her. Her only option at this point was to wake up and deal with whatever they do to her. If it's shooting her in the head, well..she only wished she could've told Dae'er she loved him more than she did.

She opened her eyes first and looked around to see who was sitting near her. Seleana, of course, then the leader and one of the prisoners while the other two were keeping watch. She sat up slowly and the two men didn't notice her. Seleana did, however, and her eyes widened at Erie's sudden consciousness. Erie put her finger up to her mouth so Seleana didn't speak and Erie just watched the two men wander around in their own daydreams.

What a bunch of fools, they had left all of her armor on and only took her weapons. She cloaked and slowly stood up. The prisoner sensed something first and shouted as he jumped to his feet, waving his gun around carelessly.

“What the fuck!” The other prisoner shouted as he joined his pal.

“Where the hell did she go?” The military man asked Seleana.

Seleana shrugged and shook her head, pretending to be as oblivious as they were. The prisoner closest to Seleana acted first and yanked her up by her arm harshly. He wrapped his arm around her and held his pistol to her head.

“Come on out, bitch, or your friend’s brains redecorate this place.” He barked.

Erie had to act fast. She didn’t have her weapons but she did have her strength and training. She went for the man with his hand around Seleana first but planned on leaving him for last. She grabbed his wrist and squeezed it abruptly causing the gun to drop to the ground. He screamed in pain and Erie shoved Seleana out of the way.

The others immediately fired off their weapons and she bolted around the fire and re-cloaked. First, the military man with the sash of grenades. She punched the gun from his grasp then threw a blow to his gut, followed by an uppercut to his nose. The impact on his nasal cavity killed him instantly.

She cloaked and moved again. The second prisoner was firing off at her footsteps amongst the foliage but she was too quick. She tackled him to the ground with her shoulder and wrapped her hands around his throat. He brought the gun up to shoot her but she took his armed hand and used it to shoot at the other prisoner coming up to her left. She aimed it at his knees as she still wanted to make sure that filthy fucking roach paid for his remarks on raping her friend.

As the lights flickered out in her current victim’s eyes, she heard the footsteps of the leader coming at her. She looked over at him and met him eye to eye before cloaking once more. She immediately hopped off of the prisoner as the leader unleashed his gunfire at nothing.

The other prisoner wailed and cried out as he held onto his blown apart kneecap. The leader walked around cautiously, firearm at the ready. Every slight sound or movement, he would turn towards it to check for her.

“I saw you.” He said. “You’re human, like us, so why are you doing the dirty work for those monsters?” He asked.

She quickly scaled a tree. “Who said it was dirty?” She replied before quickly climbing back down the trunk as he fired at the source of her voice.

“You believe killing your own kind is clean and right? Did they brainwash you into doing this?” His questions, while understandable, sounded ridiculous.

He had no clue what he was talking about and only knew that she was committing a human crime. Sure murdering people was wrong on Earth, hell, killing anything is considered wrong to oomans but to Yautja, it was a way of life. Kill or be killed. Hunt or be hunted. Whether it was oomans or Yautja, she wasn’t about to be shot down by either one of them.

“The only brainwashed one is you.” She said as she paced around him. “Killing is a crime, stealing is a crime, hell, even loving someone is a crime to humans but here, it’s free game.” He sensed her stop and he opened fire again.

His gun clicked but it didn’t matter, she was behind him already and she jumped up onto his back to wrap her arm around his neck. He slammed his fist against her forearm, struggling to get her to let go but she was far too strong. She used her other arm to throw hard heavy punches into his ribs. The first blow she felt him jerk, the second one, the bones cracked and her fist imbedded into his flesh. Another and he dropped to his knees.

She reached down and took out a military grade knife from his thigh and removed her arm from his neck. She grabbed a hold of his hair and yanked back his head.

“Are you not human?” He wheezed out.

“H-ko.” She replied as she drug the blade across his bare throat, slicing the skin clean open.

Seleana screamed hysterically, obviously she had never seen human on human killing before, especially from her closest friend. This was it though, she had done it. She’d killed the River Ghosts and all of the humans, she can finally go home to Dae’er and not be bothered. She stood up fully and looked over at Seleana.

Her friend was scared but she was alive and that was all that mattered. She helped her up and adjusted her matted hair in an attempt to cheer her up. After retrieving her weapons, she walked over to the prisoner that was trying to crawl away.

“What are we doing with him?” Seleana asked.

“I’ve got something special planned for him.” Erie said as she wrapped a rope wire around his busted leg.

“Fuck you.” He spat.

Erie ignored his obscenities as she dragged him back to the ship. It was a long walk and she was certain his leg had dislocated in the journey but there was no way she was giving this asshole any reprieve. Not for one damn second.

She opened the cargo hold on the ship and stepped up inside of it. The hounds snarled and barked as Erie picked up the prisoner and forced one of his arms into the cage. The dog tore into his flesh like it was a piece of KFC chicken. The man screamed and thrashed around as the dog chewed on his arm bone.

Erie yanked it out and the man was already fading in and out of consciousness. She jerked him and slapped him. “Don’t you even think about passing out.” She said as she dragged him over to another cage and shoved his second arm into the hound’s jaws.

This time the dogs teeth snapped the arm clean off, causing blood to gush from his missing limb. The man let out a cry of torment unlike anything she’d heard before. He begged for her to stop and pleaded for no more. Erie glanced at Seleana and the girl’s face was frozen in horror.

“You feel sorry for him? After he threatened to rape you and kill me, you feel an ounce of sympathy for this man?” Erie asked her and Seleana only squeezed her eyes shut and shook

her head.

Erie looked down at the now lifeless prisoner's body then back at Seleana. She was afraid of her, cowering in the corner of the cargo hold like Erie was..was one of them. She immediately dropped the corpse and backed away from it slowly while the hounds snarled and drooled for more flesh.

She looked down at her blood caked hands then opened and closed her sticky fists before furiously trying to wipe them off on her clothes. She had become so blood thirsty, so addicted to the rush of killing and the invisible ladder to the top of the monster pyramid that she had lost a hold on who she was.

She's not a monster to be feared, she's not a natural born killer, she was only doing this so she could be with Dae'er. Hot tears streamed down her face. She had completed her mission, there was no need for torture. She picked the man up by his legs and began to drag him out of the cargo hold when the sound of heavy familiar footsteps shook the metal grate beneath her boots.

She dropped the body and spun around to see the one soul she had been waiting for all day. She watched him remove his mask and hook it to his belt then he looked at her with prideful eyes. Her lip quivered as she tried to hold back her rivers of tears before she sprinted to him.

He lifted her up by her waist and tucked her against his clean warm body. She pressed herself tightly against him lavishing in the shelter of his bruteness. She had longed for this since the very moment she stepped foot on this ship and she wished she could just meld into him to feel completely safe from everything.

She sobbed quietly on his shoulder as he stroked and caressed her lovingly. She never fully realized just how alone she had been on this planet. Seleana and the humans had been there but she didn't feel this found with them. In his arms, his massive burly arms, she was completely safe and at home.

"I am yet again, a proud male." He whispered to her.

She tightened her hold on him and more tears streamed out. He was proud of her actions while she felt horrible about them. She was just glad it was all over. She no longer had to fight, kill or torture anyone to be considered again. She had her male and that was all that mattered.

A few more Yautja's, including the last one still alive on this hellhole, boarded behind them. Erie sniffled and rose up from Dae'er's shoulder to watch them. One of them dragged her victim the rest of the way off the ship while the others began to strap down the hounds.

"They will take the ship back to Yautja Prime while we take my ship." Dae'er said as he began to exit the cargo hold.

One of the new Yautja had a familiar body draped over his shoulder. "Hey!" She exclaimed and the male stopped abruptly. "He's mine." She said.

The male laid the body of the River Ghost onto the grate then he handed her the two circular weapons. In her hands, the things were massive and heavy and she examined them closer. Unfamiliar words were inscribed along the blades and tiny holes decorated all around the inside.

“Have you seen these before?” She asked, holding the weapons up to Dae’er.

He took them from her and tilted them around in his hands. “I’ve seen them.” He said and she felt a little disappointed. She wanted to have something he didn’t to impress him with. She supposed she wasn’t that surprised that he had, he was an experienced warrior after all. “But never up close.” He added and her eyes lit up as she smiled.

“You like them?” She asked and he nodded in affirmation. “You can have them.” She said.

“H-ko. A trophy like this needs to be kept by the one who earned it. There aren’t many Yautja who encounter a River Ghost commander and live to tell about it, let alone collect any trophies.” He handed them to the Yautja who brought them in and nodded.

“I’ll have his skull too, though.” She tried to argue her gift for Dae’er but he wasn’t having it.

“Th’syras are excellent but there’s nothing like those blades. We will put them on display for your celebration.” He said as he continued off the ship.

The celebration, she forgot about it. Apparently it was a party for her. Dae’er said there was supposed to be one for completing her chiva, one for their mating and one after a successful hunt on the game preserve. They weren’t allowed to celebrate though since she wasn’t technically a member of society but now, now they could have a million parties if they wanted. She was happy just combining everything into one giant one.

She stopped and turned to look for Seleana. One of the Yautja’s was trying to talk to her but she was having a hard time understanding what he wanted. Erie felt that she would be better off coming with them any way.

“Seleana.” Erie called out and her friend peeked from behind the Yautja. She motioned for her to come and she jogged over to her. “You can come with us.” She said.

“It’s not like going home is any better than this place.” She said sadly and Erie frowned.

She could tell her friend missed her Yautja horribly and was probably wishing he didn’t curse her with his daughter. She just hoped she didn’t do anything extreme. She was still her best friend and cherished her greatly. Erie wrapped her arm around Seleana as they walked and hugged her tightly. Seleana chuckled awkwardly and Erie promptly removed her hug. She guessed she was still unsettled about what she had done earlier to that man. To be honest, even she was still unsettled about it.

Dae’er sensed the distance between Seleana and her and would periodically look back at them. He had questions but she could tell he didn’t want to ask in front of Seleana. His ship ascended the sky and they were waiting for a confirmation to galaxy jump.

Erie tilted her head back against the seat and closed her eyes. She was tired, beyond tired and now her ribs were starting to act up again. The first thing she was going to do when she got home was hit the medical bay. Something was obviously wrong with her and was preventing her from healing. Her busted rib should’ve definitely been fixed by now.

The control panel chirped and Dae’er gave the command to jump. Erie opened her eyes to watch the huge windshield close off the glowing planets of the solar system. She was minutes

away from being home. She had only been on the game preserve for a day but it had felt like years, long strenuous years.

Dae'er's ship shifted and the windshield opened. Erie looked over at Seleana who was curled up in the seat the best she could with the seat belt wrapped around her. If only the Yautja knew how fragile humans were, they would probably use a different race as companions. If Seleana were back on Earth, years and years of therapy couldn't help her forget everything. The more she witnessed her friends spiraling depression, the more she understood why companions were euthanized at their master's death.

When they stepped off the ship, a crowd was gathered in the port. Four extremely old Yautja were standing in a cleared out circle along with Dae'er's father. From the history lesson she received from Dae'er, she knew that these four guys were Ancients, they were the most respected Yautja and even had control over what the king did for most things. She knew they were all going to gather, she just didn't expect there to be so many others.

She looked around the crowd and there were definitely more Yautja here than what lived in Dae'er's clan's citadel. All of them were gathered to witness what would happen next in this Erie and Dae'er soap opera.

She looked up at Dae'er and his mandibles arched in the Yautja smile. She frowned up at him nervously and he linked his massive hand around her petite one then held them both up in the air, lifting her feet off the ramp. He bellowed loudly, a war cry of victory, and the crowd roared with him, what she guessed were cheers of their satisfaction with her hunt.

She watched as Dae'er lavished in the adoration of his mate. He slammed his fist against his chest and continued to rile up the crowd. She was elated that everyone was cheering instead of just gawking at her like a dirty rat but it was overwhelming. Thousands of massive Yautja roaring and bellowing was definitely a sight to see and hear.

One of the Ancient's held up his hands to calm the crowd and within seconds they were still again and back to watching the show. She looked at the elder and he gestured for her to come closer. She removed her bio mask and slid it into her covering. Well, here goes nothing, but before her feet could move, Dae'er was already escorting her down the ramp. He was much more eager and excited for what was happening or going to happen than she was.

"Mei-hsweis and mei-jadhis," The Ancient called out when she approached him. 'What we witnessed today will be the beginning of a new chapter in Yautja history. An ooman, a lou-dte kale ooman, has exceeded beyond expectation. She excelled where her brethren could not, broke records that even our best could only dream of breaking and in front of countless amounts of witnesses, showed us her metal Yautja heart beating in her chest.' He turned to face her. "She returns to us, a ju'ha, worthy of leading us for centuries to come and I, for one, am grateful to be alive to witness her forthcoming." He said as he gave her the honorable salute then dropped to one knee.

Erie watched in shock as the other Ancients did the same then the king and the crowd followed suit. All of these powerful Yautja dropping to their knees to bow to her. As she received this enormous amount of respect from the people that once had none for her, she couldn't help but to smile. For once, in the entire time she'd been there, she was the tallest person in the room. It was her that was towering over people and she cherished every rare second of it. Who knows, maybe this princess thing wouldn't be so bad after all.

Chapter 21

Thank you for choosing Devotion

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It'd been a couple weeks since No'elia returned from the game preserve and she'd been busy selecting what she wanted for her revelry. His father had also been stealing away his mate from time to time, telling her stories of his days of old and even though Dae'er disliked their time together, he did see a change in his father's deknas. He knew No'elia was reminding him of his long lost ooman and as long as he kept his claws to himself, Dae'er had no problem with his father using her as a source of comfort.

He watched No'elia as she picked out decorations on a screen. She wanted to pick out everything, from food to colors of goblets and plates right down to the c'nlip. She had explained that it was an ooman thing, to pick and select trivial parts of a revelry but the frequent visits from vendors was beginning to irk him. He gave a low steady growl, signaling that he was finished dealing with the current vendor in his home and No'elia picked up on his aggravation.

She quickly picked an item and the shopkeeper selected it then scanned No'elia's wrist gauntlet to pay for it. She smiled at her then waved before Dae'er closed the door behind her. She was happy, excited even and he was glad she was finally fully enjoying her time in her new life. She was in the middle of telling him her ideas for the revelry when he no longer could restrain his question.

"No'elia." He interrupted her and she stopped mid sentence and looked up at him in anticipation. "Are you ready to see Pilo now?"

Her eyes shifted from his in uneasiness. There was a reason for her body not healing the way it should after her injury at the game preserve. Her mi flower not fulfilling its duties and Dae'er had a hunch it was supplying nutrients to something much more important than a busted rib.

For some reason though, No'elia had refused to see Pilo. She had yet to give an actual reason beyond her small little excuses but Dae'er was done dancing around with her. He wanted to know why she refused to see him and he wasn't going to stop pressuring her until she gave him one.

"No'elia." He pushed and she looked up at him dejectedly. "Your body isn't healing correctly and your mi flower isn't rejuvenating you as it should. We must see Pilo to check if you are with pup."

"I can't." She said as she sighed away from him.

“What purpose restrains you from going?” He asked.

“What if I’m not? I’d rather not go through all of that again.” Finally, a real reason as to why she wouldn’t go.

She was afraid to know, afraid that it would be another failed attempt but for some reason, Dae’er felt that it wasn’t this time. He reached for her hand and she moved away from him. His patience had run out with the vendors and her excuses, he was taking her whether she wanted to go or not.

He moved quickly and lifted her up over his shoulder. She fought him, much harder than the last time he had her in this position, back on Earth. Her blows to his backside actually hurt but he was still a much mightier foe and was able to bite through her attempts to be set free.

He was careful not to hurt her as he carried her kicking and screaming out of their dwellings. Out in the corridor, she put all of her strength into getting away and when she pulled off his ki’cti-pa, he was forced to set her down. She extended the combi stick and maneuvered it like it belonged to her. He supposed this was the downside to turning his frail little mate into a ruthless sain’ja.

“No’elia, see reason.” He tried to persuade her with words once more.

“I don’t want to go and you can’t pauking make me!” She shouted as she used the ki’cti-pa to run across the wall and kick him straight in the chest.

Dae’er stumbled backwards slightly but it didn’t hurt. He raised his tresses in anger. She was challenging him, fighting for her choice to not go see Pilo even if her health was in jeopardy. She was being unreasonable and foolish. Her emotions were clouding her ability to see what she needed to do. Not only did she need to be concerned for her own health but also for the pups that might be growing inside of her.

“Are you challenging me?” He asked grimly.

“Sei-i.” She affirmed as she backed her way slowly into the kehrite.

“Challenged accepted.” He replied as he followed her into the training room and closed and locked the door behind him.

He cut the lights, hoping to instill fear but she was unmoved. Her breathing remained steady, her stance remained unwavering and her senses were high, just waiting for him to make a move. He cloaked and watched as she activated her own. He was at a slight disadvantage since she had his weapon but he didn’t intend to use a weapon on her. He didn’t want to hurt her or even beat her, he only wanted her to see reason and if defeating her in a challenge was it, then so be it.

He felt the air shift around him and he barely saw her blur by. The sound of his ki’cti-pa scraping the floor yanked his head in the direction of the sound, only to be kicked in the chest again. This time she kept up her assault and attempted to use his own weapon against him.

She jabbed and swung, swiped and lunged but she never got an actual blow on him. He blocked every hit and each one stung worse than the one before it. Her strength was immense and he was surprised at how strong she had actually become. It was impressive how belief drove one to fight for what they felt like was their life.

She growled in anger and slammed his ki'cti-pa into the floor of the kehrite before recloaking and going back to stalking him. She was using his training well. He had taught her to take a step back when she felt overwhelmed with emotion but he also knew his mate.

He spent every waking moment with his female. He knew how she slept, what foods she enjoyed and he even knew her daily routine step by step. He had lavished in her scent, longed for her touch and even tasted her sweetness in his mouth. He knew everything about her and while the tactics he had taught her would work on unfamiliar opponents, on him however, he knew every move she would make, predicted it even. The moment she announced this duel, she had lost it.

His ears twitched and with one firm hand he reached down and grabbed a hold of an invisible No'elia, lifting her up by the back of her neck as she swung recklessly at him with her daggers. He held her out facing her away from his body to keep those razor sharp blades from nicking his skin and deactivated her cloak. She writhed in his grip and cursed in ooman and Yautja at his hold on her.

With his free hand he reached out and grasped her wrists one by one and gave a firm squeeze to release her weapons. He stripped off her wrist gauntlet and sivk'va-tal, followed by her biomask, rendering her defenses useless.

"Let go of me!" She spat. "This isn't a duel, this is..this is an inequitable move!"

"You actually believe that I would lay a claw on you? Or a blade for that matter?" He asked calmly to try to soothe her but it only fueled her fire. It was if she wanted him to react negatively.

Once he exited the kehrite, he shifted her into a bridal position and held her tightly to his body, preventing her from moving around. Her body jerked against his as he carried her to the infirmary. Something was definitely wrong with her, an intense emotional outburst like the one he had just witnessed was not like her. If she wasn't with pup and something wasn't wrong with her physically, Dae'er was unsure of how he would deal with a mentally unstable mate. He prayed to Paya that this wasn't No'elia's case.

Dae'er carried the squirming No'elia to the window where the medical workers were and only mentioned Pilo's name to get them to jump up and react. Dae'er only waited a couple minutes before the Yautja he wanted to see appeared through the double doors. Dae'er shoved by a startled Pilo and hastily moved to his office.

"Lay her out on the table." Pilo instructed and as soon as Dae'er lifted some of his strength, No'elia increased her aggression. "Hold her in your lap and I'll draw a thwei sample that way."

Dae'er regained control on No'elia and sat down on the small table. He used one hand to hold her against his chest and the other to still her legs.

"I'm going to hold and extend her arm to take a sample. I'm not going to hurt her, only restrain her." Pilo instructed and Dae'er watched as the male did as he had stated.

No'elia no longer fought and shouted obscenities but sobbed deeply. Her muscles relaxed and she sank against Dae'er's body willingly. Just like that she had gone from an angry hysteria state to a dismal one. Dae'er let go of his hold on her and she turned and buried her

face into his chest. He didn't understand how she had switched emotions so suddenly. Was she angry at him or sad?

Whichever it was, there was obviously pain behind each one. The pain of knowing she had failed even though she hadn't. At this point, he no longer cared if she carried his pup, he only wanted her safe and healthy. The emotional strain the whole situation was causing her was beyond what he thought would happen. If he knew how she would be now back before they agreed to Pilo's experiment, he never would've let No'elia go through it. Paya help him.

He cradled her and started up a lulling purr to ease her and after a while it helped settle her. Dae'er glanced at Pilo with impatient deknas. What the pauk was that male doing? How long did this take?

Dae'er watched as the male poked around on a glass screen before turning to face him. "The experiment." The male started. "Was a success."

Pilo's words had No'elia jerking her head around to see. "What?" She questioned.

"You are with pup." Pilo confirmed and No'elia scrambled away from Dae'er's hold to the end of the table.

"Show me." She stated firmly.

"It's only numbers at the moment but I can.." Pilo tried to explain but No'elia was having none of it.

"Show me!" She demanded and Pilo grabbed a glass tablet and showed No'elia a list of exactly what he had said it was, numbers. "What do these mean? I can't even read this c'jit." She said as she scrolled through the results.

"No'elia." Dae'er warned, trying to stop her anger from climbing again.

"Are you sure?" She asked Pilo with a much calmer voice.

"Sei-i. I ran the test multiple times to be certain." Pilo answered and No'elia cupped her hand over her mouth and laughed, slowly at first, but then it built up into a louder one.

Dae'er was completely taken aback by her emotional outbursts. Was she happy or sad? Angry or overjoyed? It was beginning to get hard to tell as they flipped like a switch too frequently.

"What of her mi flower? Why has it stopped healing her?" Dae'er asked.

"The nutrients the flower provides is going to sustaining the pup at the moment but once No'elia takes the vitamin supplements, the flower should continue with sustaining the health of just her." Pilo said as he went over to the refrigeration box and removed two vials of what he called supplements.

"Are there any side effects?" Dae'er questioned.

"H-ko, none I've encountered yet. As I've stated, it is only an.." Pilo explained.

"An experiment. I understand." Dae'er replied as Pilo loaded one of the supplements into a syringe gun and administered it to No'elia.

“When can we see it?” She asked as the medical Yautja finished the second one.

“Give it another week and we should have a good image of the pup. At the current moment, the only thing you will see is a cell.” Pilo answered as he cleaned the syringe gun.

“Why always a week? A week here, a week there. Why?” No’elia asked.

“The gestation is short for hybrids, it is imperative to keep tabs on the pups throughout the entire pregnancy. Complications could occur and the faster we can address them, the better the chance the pup has of surviving.” Pilo elaborated as he poked around more on his glass screen.

Dae’er supposed that made sense. He knew nothing of pups and pregnancies, he just knew that No’elia now needed to take better care of herself and refrain from trying to duel him or anything else for that matter. He helped her down and they left the medical bay.

The entire walk back to their wing was filled with silence. He knew a lot of her stress and fear had to be lifted now that she finally had her hopes fulfilled. They entered his dwellings and he watched as she curled up on the couch and laid there.

He didn’t know what to say or do. He figured he had done enough and perhaps it was best to let her come to him. Maybe she was tired from fighting him and only needed to rest. His door alerted him that someone was at it and he checked to see who it was.

He grunted when he saw another vendor. “No’elia, do you wish to continue with your revelry planning or shall I instruct this vendor to return at a later time?”

He took her empty response as the latter and got rid of the vendor. “Which one was it?” No’elia asked quietly from the couch.

“Food.” He responded as he walked over to her and crouched down so that he was closer to her face.

“We need food.” She muttered.

“Then I will get you food.” He replied.

“How? Kv’var?” She questioned.

“Sei-i. I must kv’var anyway to retrieve supplies for our pup.” He answered as he ran his claws through her long dark hair.

“The softest and finest fur that exists?” She asked, referring to a statement he had told her before.

“Sei-i. Our pup will only have the best.” He responded as he trailed his hand down the curve of her side.

“When are we leaving?” She inquired.

“After the revelry, if you desire.” He said and she nodded as a tear streamed down her cheek.

He caught the droplet with his finger and she nuzzled into his palm. He rose and scooped her up as he did then carried her to their bed. He laid her down and went to pull the furs onto

her but she protested. He submitted begrudgingly as he swiped back some of her hair before leaving her to rest.

When Dae'er went to leave, his sire was waiting at the end of his wing, conversing with his mei-hswei and Talia. As Dae'er approached, he could Talia was holding back some sort emotion but with all of the ones he had encountered today from No'elia, it was difficult to read her.

His sire however, was quite easy to read. "My son, I believe felicitations are in order."

Dae'er cocked his head to the side. Surely they didn't already know of No'elia's condition. His sire placed his hand on his shoulder and shook it roughly. It would certainly explain Talia's reaction at the moment.

"Has the gender been determined yet?" Jae'dar questioned.

Dae'er knew why his mei-hswei was interested in that information and it wasn't just to be elated like his sire was. If it's a male pup that No'elia carries, then it was possible for Jae'dar to lose his status as First Born. Of course that took a pauk load of votes from the Ancients and Dae'er had only heard of such a situation when the First Born took hundreds of years to produce an heir. There was no doubt in Dae'er's mind that Jae'dar had already been attempting to produce one with Talia and the concern in his deknas wasn't just about losing his status. In Yautja society, sterile males and females were cast out as Bad Bloods, even if they never committed an actual crime.

It would add insult to injury if the First Born's mei-hswei not only produced a male heir but did so with an ooman, via experiment. Jae'dar was walking a thin line and while Dae'er did feel sorry for his older mei-hswei, he couldn't change the fate Paya bestowed upon him if he were to sire a son.

Dae'er glanced at Talia. If Jae'dar's lack of a pup was caused by anything, he bet it had to do with her. She was determined to bring shame to his bloodline in some way or another. Only this way was certain to get his mei-hswei banished.

"H-ko, it has not." Dae'er replied as a small wave of relief washed through Jae'dar but he was still in a predicament.

"All in good time." His sire said as he nodded. "Speaking of, where is she?"

"Resting. She's had a busy day." Dae'er replied.

"Ah, the revelry! What a day tomorrow will be. I am looking forward to seeing the skull of the River Ghost commander myself. I've never seen one up close." His sire's happiness seemed undiluted by the tension between Talia and Jae'dar but Dae'er couldn't help but notice it.

Talia surely knew this information as well and they'd probably already discussed it..or not. Perhaps it was why she was giving a hard stare at Jae'dar. She was deep in thought too and Dae'er wanted to know exactly what the conniving female was thinking about. Whatever it was, he was certain it wasn't worry like Jae'dar was feeling at the moment.

She was a despicable and spiteful female but she was still cunning. She was good at convincing others of her false beatitude but Dae'er could see right through her. She wasn't

thinking of how Jae'dar could be cast out, she was probably thinking of how she could be saved from the current that was sucking them both down. She was a walking time bomb, ready to blow at any second, and Dae'er was certain that his mei-hswei was going to be the only victim of her explosion.

No'elia's revelry had begun before they both had even awoke from sleep. While most sain'ja enjoyed wearing their awu'asa to such events held in their honor, No'elia insisted on wearing a tight black leather "dress" as she called it. He didn't object too much as she looked incredible in it. She wore her dark hair down, just how he liked it and the necklace he had given her stood out the most, also how he liked it.

He watched as she checked herself with her bio mask for the fifth or sixth time now. At first he thought she was checking out her attire but after the third time, it was obvious she was trying to see their pup. He'd be lying if he said he wasn't doing the same, his peeks just weren't as obvious as hers as he was always wearing his biomask.

"Not much longer." He purred as he wrapped his hand around the silky ebony strands of her hair.

"I don't want to wait anymore. I'm tired of waiting." She whined.

"Sei-i, as am I." He stated as he moved her hair to the side and saw the markings of their mating on the base of her neck. "You'll need another marking to show your feats at the game preserve."

"Another? I think I'm running out of skin for all of these tattoos." She said smirking and leaning back against him.

"Would you like status rings instead?" He questioned as he pictured her mane decorated with colorful bands. He didn't like it, he enjoyed her hair as it was.

"I'm not too sure about those either." She replied. Good.

It was important for her to show her accomplishments though, whether it be with markings or rings, she needed some way to show off. He escorted her to the revelry and watched as she was announced by an Ancient. There were thousands of Yautja, the citadel had to be overflowing with bodies right now. He had been to countless revelries but never saw one so heavily attended.

They were gathered around the case that contained the weapons of the River Ghost commander. Mostly high status sain'ja and a few Young Bloods who would never get to see such blades in their entire lifetime, he was certain of it. They were quite impressive, and the way she defeated him with an injury and with pup..she was putting these sain'ja to shame. Pauk, even he felt a little inferior to her and if she wasn't his mate, he'd certainly try and woo her all over again. She was an excellent female to bear pups with.

At the current moment, No'elia was being bombarded by high status Yautja females. He barely heard them discussing her selection of revelry items and he used the moment to slip away. He strode over to the case where the weapons were and the males gathered around it quieted immediately.

“Prince Dae’er.” Hunter Baguura gave him the honorary salute and Dae’er nodded. “It seems your female has climbed the ladder to the top faster than any Young Blood I’ve ever seen. Are you concerned with her surpassing you?”

It was a joke but he was certain if No’elia was put to the task, she could definitely clear out a kainde amedha den, no questions asked. Possibly more than once. With his training and her will, she could certainly achieve his status.

“H-ko, if my female decided to advance to my status, then it is you that should be concerned, not I, Baguura.” Dae’er replied.

“Why is that, my prince?” He inquired.

“If an injured pup heavy ju’ha can take down a River Ghost commander with one dagger, why hasn’t an able bodied Yautja male accomplished such a feat?” Dae’er remarked.

“Can the same not be asked of you?” Baguura questioned.

“Sei-i, what are we doing with our lives, Baguura?” Dae’er laughed as he laid a hand on his clan mei-hswei’s shoulder and shook it firmly.

Dae’er enjoyed the festivities, sipping down his fair share of c’nlip while boasting of his female. He had wandered around, conversing with many of his clan mei-hswei’s and tended to No’elia when she was feeling overwhelmed. There were Yautja from every clan and even some of the Ancients had taken time to come and celebrate the forthcoming of his female. After a while of exploring, there were a couple of faces he didn’t see.

His sire and Jae’dar had yet to reveal themselves. He had seen Talia, shooting him nasty looks but not his own thwei. It was strange and a little unnerving especially since his father looked forward to this ever since No’elia returned from the game preserve.

Dae’er spent the next hour sitting next to No’elia just watching and observing the crowd enjoy the hard work she had put into this revelry. He was about to retire to his quarters for a while when a frantic servant shoved his way through the crowd.

He immediately recognized the scrawny male as one of his sire’s servants. Dae’er was eager to hear the explanation the servant had as to why his sire and his mei-hswei hadn’t attended No’elia’s revelry. He motioned for the male to come forward and he hastily approached.

“Where is my sire?” Dae’er asked first.

“Prince Dae’er, he requests your presence immediately at his citadel.” The servant gasped out.

“I am in the middle of a celebration, what could be more important than this?” Dae’er inquired, clutching No’elia’s hand in his.

“It is your mei-hswei, he is in trouble. That is all I at liberty to say.” The servant said as Dae’er narrowed his eyes at him, still trying to determine if it was worth leaving his mate.

“It sounds serious.” No’elia stated. “Maybe you should go.”

“H-ko, it is my duty to stay by your side. Whatever trouble my mei-shwei has gotten himself into is none of my concern. You are my concern.” Dae’er explained.

“This poor guy looks distraught and if it was something trivial, your sire would still come to my revelry. It must be something horrible for him to not be here.” No’elia said as she looked between Dae’er and the servant, the servant hastily nodding in agreement.

Dae’er thought about it for a moment. No’elia made a point. His sire had been so devoted to No’elia the past few weeks, assisting her with the revelry and relishing in the fact that his son had chosen such a worthy female to mate with. He wouldn’t miss this day if it weren’t something important. Dae’er looked No’elia for a moment and she smiled.

“Just go, if it’s nothing serious then you’ll be back soon and I’ll be here waiting on you. There’s enough of the desserts left to last me a while so I’ll be alright.” She reassured him.

After a moment of hesitation, he stepped down off the pedestal but not before nuzzling and breathing in No’elia’s scent. She kissed him on the side of his mandible before he followed the servant through the crowd. He hoped it was nothing so he could return to No’elia as soon as possible. He didn’t want to be away from his pup heavy female but if something were wrong with Jae’dar, he supposed it was also his duty as his mei-hswei to assist him. No’elia had a point though, it had to be something serious if his sire was also consumed with it. Dae’er only hoped it was something fixable.

Chapter 22

Thank you for choosing Devotion!

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After Dae'er had to abruptly leave to be with his father, Erie was left to handle the revelry by herself. It wasn't too bad though, they seemed preoccupied with festivities and food. She still couldn't believe this huge celebration was for her. Yautja from other clans had even come to admire her hard work and to get a glimpse at the new ooman princess. She thought they'd all want to talk to her but so far only a handful of Yautja said anything and they only greeted her with the honorary saying. She guessed Yautja custom was to leave the royal alone which was fine with her.

Dae'er had objected to her selection of multiple dessert tables but if she weren't pregnant, getting five dessert tables wouldn't have seemed like a good idea. People were eating it, just not like she was. She was on her fourth plate of berry filled Twinkie things.

Now that she was going to have a pup of her own, there was one thing she hadn't noticed before, there were no children running around. Not here, not ever. She wondered where they were. Maybe the mother kept them at home. Going by their adult versions, they had to be rambunctious little Yautja. Maybe it was good thing they stayed confined.

She looked around and saw Talia giving her the evil eye. She definitely didn't feel like dealing with that mess right now so she meandered back into the crowd of people that were gathered around her trophies. She spotted a familiar face not too far from her and she smiled as she headed for Seleana.

"Seleana!" Erie exclaimed as she hugged her friend. Seleana didn't hug back but that was okay, she knew she'd probably been through a lot. "What do you think?"

"It's nice, fruit. The nicest thing I've been to since my original master died." Seleana said solemnly.

Erie frowned. She really did wish she could help her friend. If she could somehow steal her from Talia without being noticed, she most certainly would. She'd even buy her from Talia but she knew Talia would only say no out of spite. She'd rather beat Seleana than give her to someone that actually cares for her.

"Well you can have whatever you want. The desserts are good." Erie said as she shoved a Twinkie Seleana's way.

"No thanks, maybe later. So I heard the news." Seleana said as she gestured at Erie's midsection.

“How do you..” Erie asked but then realized that Talia had probably told everyone she knew by now.

She probably had a massive argument with the First Born or Seleana. Erie didn’t understand why she was so jealous. She had the First Born, she was going to be queen one day and she had Erie’s best friend to take her frustrations out on. She just didn’t understand why she had to linger on her and Dae’er’s business like it was her own.

“Yes, according to the doctor, I’m about three weeks. We should be able to see it on the biomask here soon. Pretty cool, huh?” Erie asked and Seleana frowned.

“Yeah, pretty cool. Hey, I want to show you something. Do you think you could part with your party for a second?” Her friend asked as she forced a smile to try and sweeten her deal.

“Sure, you’re my best friend, I have all the time in the world for you.” Erie said as she walked with Seleana out of the massive room, leaving everyone and the revelry behind.

They walked down a corridor that Erie knew quite well. It was the hall that led to that huge atrium and on her free days, she’d bring bread crumbs to the koi. She smiled when she figured out where Seleana was taking her.

“Are we almost there?” Erie asked as she held back a grin.

“Yep, just right up here.” Seleana replied.

When they stopped at the cargo pods, she looked at her friend in confusion. She watched as Seleana punched in the code and the doors opened. What could she possibly be trying to show her in here? From what Dae’er said, they were just transporter pods, nothing cool or different. She decided to entertain her friend and followed her into the bay.

As Seleana closed the doors, Erie couldn’t help but question. “Why are we here?” She asked.

“Come on, I want to show you these pods.” Seleana said as she gestured for her to follow her closer to the five circular doorways that led inside the small transporters.

“Dae’er told me they’re for transporting goods to planets.” Erie stated.

“Yeah but they’re much more than that. Take a peek.” Seleana said as she stood outside of one and motioned for Erie to go inside.

She eyed her friend for a moment but then decided to humor her. She walked over and leaned down. It was the same as the last time she took a peek into one. Small, closed in, barely big enough for her. Nothing neat.

“Step inside. Take a look out the window.” Seleana instructed.

Erie didn’t want to, in fact, she wanted to head back to revelry in case Dae’er came back. She hesitated as she looked up at Seleana from her bent over stance. When her friend’s sad eyes and forced smile tore apart any idea of doing anything else, she smiled.

“Alright.” She said as she climbed in and kneeled down to look out across the city. “This is pretty neat. You can see everything from way up here.” Erie said but Seleana didn’t reply.

When she turned to head out of the pod, the door on it quickly closed. She peered out the small window to see Seleana looking right at her a few feet away.

“Ha ha, very funny, Seleana. You can let me out now.” Erie said.

“I don’t think I will. What you don’t seem to understand, fruit, is that it’s not been the death of my master that’s had me down. Granted, I have been sad about it, a little, but he was a bigger asshole than Talia could ever hope to be.” Erie couldn’t believe what her friend was saying. Hell, she couldn’t believe she just locked her into this pod.

“Come on, Seleana, this isn’t funny. Dae’er will be back soon and he won’t like you locking me in here, even if it’s a joke.” Erie said trying to coax her friend out from behind the crazy line she had crossed so long ago.

“Sweetheart, I couldn’t give two shits about your prince and his title. Do I look like I give two shits? Come on.” Seleana said looking at her annoyed.

This wasn’t happening. Seleana had cracked. No, not cracked, broke. Shattered completely. Fell off her rocker and was now wallowing in her own mess. Erie frantically tried to find a handle but there wasn’t one. No button, no latch, not even a control panel. She looked back out the window at Seleana.

“All those years, confined to his quarters or the daycare, can get quite boring. While he never taught me how to speak like you can, he did however teach me how to read. So on those days when he would abandon me in his little house, I’d read and boy, do the Ancients have stuff to read.” Seleana said as she paced back and forth. “Blueprints, schematics and manuals on every device and machine this shithole has. My favorite thing would have to be these pods. Indestructible and you can control where it goes, how fast, how slow and all you have to do is plug in a destination, like this.” Seleana said as she messed with something off to the right of the pod.

“Stop, please, Seleana. Don’t do this. Whatever you want, I’ll get it for you.” Erie pleaded as something inside her pod chirped.

“Sure, your life. If you can give me everything you have, right fucking now, then I will let you out!” Seleana screamed.

Erie looked at her in bewilderment. “I don’t understand.” She said.

“Are you kidding me? Are you that dense? I’ve been here five fucking hundred years and what do I have to show for it? Nothing. Abso-fucking-lutely nothing. No princess position, no mate, no baby wriggling around in my gut, hell, not even a second glance from anyone.” She said as she moved her face close to the pod and lowered her tone. “Then you come along and not even a year goes by and you’ve got it all. Every human girl’s dream on this alien covered rock is to at least be in control of something. If not their own body then their heart. So no, fruit, you can’t give me anything but I can certainly take something from you.” Seleana stepped back away from the door.

Erie was in tears. The one person that had helped her through everything was the same person that was going to take it all away. She didn’t have her wrist gauntlet or any weapon for that matter. She had no way of calling Dae’er except screaming for him. All that training and conditioning couldn’t help her now. It was the trust for her only friend that ultimately

defeated her. The trophies out there meant nothing but the obvious hurt in Seleana's heart, well, that meant everything.

"Where are you sending me?" Erie weeped.

"Earth. Back to where you came from, out of everyone's hair, especially mine." Seleana said as she messed with the control panel some more.

"Dae'er will come for me." Erie said.

"I don't doubt that he will, if he can find you, that is. You see what I'm doing now is making it to where you can't track your pod. Once again, all that reading, it does the body well." Seleana replied.

"He'll kill you, torture you until you tell him." Erie threatened.

Seleana laughed like a super villain. "Are you fucking serious? What can he do to me that hasn't already been done? Besides, he'll never get the chance to."

The pod clicked then shifted as it began to separate from the citadel. Erie cried even more and was screaming for someone, anyone to help her. Seleana pulled out a ceremonial dagger she had gotten from somewhere, the First Born's weapon rack, she guessed.

"Seleana, please!" Erie tried again.

"No, fruit, just shut the hell up and suffer, like I did all of those years." Erie watched as Seleana plunged the dagger through her gut, three times before keeling over and bleeding out on the floor.

Erie had killed, sliced, jabbed and stabbed but for some reason, watching Seleana take her own life was the most horrifying sight she had seen thus far. She covered her mouth with her hand as she sobbed and as the pod began to drift away from the citadel.

This was really happening, she was about to be shot through space and possibly be on Earth before Dae'er even returned from the citadel. She will be long gone before he even realized it. She had no way of contacting him or signaling where she was headed. Like Seleana said, he'd have to hunt her down which could take God knows how long.

She couldn't help but wonder how long Seleana had been coarse about her. Since she stated that Dae'er was training her? Since the mating? Since the game preserve? Maybe even when she first walked into the daycare. She'd been lied to the whole time and Erie couldn't believe she'd been played a fool. Dae'er had even mentioned that something wasn't right but he thought it was because of Talia, instead it was a mixture of both of them.

Erie looked out the window as the massive crowd below her and the buildings got further and further away. No one even wondered about a pod taking off. Probably just another load to another planet except the cargo on this one was much more precious than any weapon or supply.

Earth was probably significantly different now. It'd been hundreds of Earth years since she'd been gone. No one she knew would even exist anymore and who knows how long she'll be stuck there. A girl arriving in an unknown spacecraft would certainly draw attention and even more when she didn't age or get sick.

The only thing she could do now was pray. Pray that Dae'er found her before she landed on Earth. Pray that he got to her before she had their pup and pray that if she did land on earth, that they didn't do anything to harm her. She may be human but to other humans, she was an alien. Paya, God, help her.

Chapter 23

Thank you for choosing Devotion!

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Dae'er had arrived at his father's citadel a little upset he was called away from No'elia's revelry but he was suspicious as to why his father and Jae'dar hadn't attended. He strode through the foyer and noticed the servants were frantically moving from one room to another.

He entered the throne room but his father wasn't there. From a meeting room off to the side of the throne he could hear his father's voice shouting over some of the Ancients. Dae'er fast walked into the room and his father looked at him with a look he had never seen his father make.

Something must've been really astray for his father to be concerned. The Ancients looked serious and unconcerned by the matter. His sire came over and laid his hands on Dae'er's shoulders.

"It's Jae'dar." His father said sadly.

Dae'er immediately thought his brother had perished but that didn't explain the Ancients presence. Plus he saw Talia at the revelry, if his brother had died she wouldn't be enjoying festivities. Dae'er looked at his father then the Ancients.

"Where's Jae'dar?" He said angrily as he glared at the Ancients.

Those old fools had probably found some minute problem with his brother. They had nothing better to do with their lives but scrounge up old ridiculous rules and enforce them. They hadn't been able to press their thumb since No'elia and him had mated, he didn't doubt if they were just trying to stir the pot.

"He has failed as a male. He's been mated almost a year and has not produced an heir while your female has." His father didn't need to continue for Dae'er to know what happens next.

The laws that declared whether or not a Yautja was honorable were so strict and even the slightest crime could brand someone as tainted. Whether it is slaughtering your own kind or something as trivial as not being able to produce young, it was dishonorable. Especially for a First Born like Jae'dar who was expected to produce plenty of heirs. His brother's fate had been set the day No'elia conceived.

"He has been sentenced to honorable death so a more worthy male can ascend the throne." One of the Ancients said and Dae'er shot his father a look of disbelief.

“H-ko. This can’t be. Surely there’s been a mistake. Perhaps it is his mate that is barren.” Dae’er exclaimed.

“H-ko, they’ve both been examined. Ju’ha Talia is more than capable of conceiving while the prince is not. I assure you, we have double checked this and wouldn’t have made a ruling had we not been certain.” Another Ancient explained.

“Then triple check. This is your First Born, your future king, and you are prepared to force him in front of Cetanu on a couple of poor examinations. Fetch a new medical Yautja, check Talia again, that malicious female could be preventing herself from conceiving just to cause ripples in the water!” Dae’er yelled at the gray old Yautja.

“Prince Dae’er, we have triple checked, quadruple checked and even tested for malicious activity on both parts. I adore the First Born as much as the next honorable Yautja but without an heir and while he still lives and breathes the royal bloodline cannot proceed!” The Ancient returned Dae’er’s frustration with his own.

“Where is he? Where is he, father?” Dae’er said as he began to panic.

His mei-hswei was cruel and annoying at times but he was still his mei-hswei. They grew up together, trained together, fought and even killed together, he couldn’t just stand and watch him end his life. His father was in a stupor as much as he was as he gazed out into empty space.

“Father!” Dae’er roared.

“That’s why you’ve been summoned, my son. Your brother has fled his punishment, he has chosen his path and decided to run on it. This is out of our hands but if anyone could convince him to return, it is you.” His father explained as he handed something wrapped in a cloth to Dae’er.

He glanced at his father as he opened it and nearly dropped the item on the floor. It was his mei-hswei’s necklace, passed down between father to son as an heir was born, a symbol to bear as the First Born. He shoved the pendant and cloth back into his father’s hands.

“Jae’dar will need this when he returns and when he does, you will examine him again and that bitch of a mate.” He said sternly as he turned and stormed out of the room.

The audacity of those senile old Yautja. Asking him to bounty kv’var his own mei-hswei, he should turn and split every throat in that room, his father’s included for allowing such atrocities to occur. He was his son for Paya’s sake, he should at least be as optimistic as Dae’er was about the situation but instead he has accepted Jae’dar’s fate and was passing down the First Born pendant like he was already dead.

Dae’er looked up to see a frantic servant heading his way. Dae’er eyed him suspiciously as he stopped in front of him, completely out of breath and stuttering out incomprehensible words.

“Speak!” Dae’er roared.

“The ju’ha.” He panted.

“Talia?” Dae’er questioned.

“H-ko.” The male winced.

Dae’er could’ve sworn the world had just collapsed in on itself. He was standing here but felt like he was miles away. Everything seemed to be moving in slow motion, even him, and he hadn’t even gave his feet the command but they were moving anyway.

It all seemed to blur past him, the ship ride back to his clan’s citadel, the lift ride up to where the revelry was being held, and even when people had flooded around him trying to explain what happened. None of it registered in his mind until he followed the massive crowd gathered around the port where the supply pods were.

He saw thwei, ooman thwei, a massive amount of it too, all over the floor. When he saw the empty face of No’elia’s friend being covered and prepared to be taken out of the room, he thought it would’ve eased his mind but it didn’t.

He entered the room and stared at the ooman thwei, wondering if some of it belonged to his mate and where she was now. His bio mask wasn’t picking her signal up.

“Where is she?” He rumbled out and the crowd quieted.

Everything came back to him, like his senses had become much more clearer. No one was answering him though and he was losing his patience.

“Where is she?!” He roared angrily and solemnly at the same time.

“We don’t know, sire.” His servant stepped forward and replied.

“At least a thousand Yautja stand before me now and not one knows where the guest of honor has gone?” He questioned in disbelief.

The crowd shifted their eyes, looking at one another waiting for someone else to speak up. Dae’er wanted answers and now. He turned his attention to the gawking Talia and approached her rapidly. This female has been the cause of his problems since the first day he laid deknas on her. First his mei-hswei was deemed unworthy because she wasn’t bearing a son and now his mate was missing. It all seemed to well planned to be a coincidence.

He yanked his bloodlines crest off the chain she wore around her neck and dropped it to the floor. She yelped as he wrapped his hand around the back of her neck and drug her from the crowd. He shoved her on to the floor and she quickly turned over to face him.

“I know you are to blame for what has happened today. If you desire to see another sun rise, you will tell me where she is!” He bellowed.

She laughed quietly then much more loudly, the wicked sound echoing through the hollow port. She wiped at a small trickle of thwei from her mouth then stood up.

“You blame me for your ooman mate disappearing but did it ever occur to you that maybe she left on her own?” She said gesturing off to her right.

Dae’er looked over and saw a pod missing. The green light indicating that it had arrived at its destination. He strode over and tried to use the command to return it but it had been overwritten and the code to call it back had been changed.

“She wouldn’t have left.” He said to Talia.

“Is that right? You know her so well? If I remember correctly she was a pet before you decided to domesticate her. Afraid, unsure, longing to be anywhere but here and you believe she’s changed? Because you showed her how to use a sword?” Talia said as she paced in front of him, she was talking to him but was looking at the crowd.

She was trying to persuade these Yautja into believing what she was saying. To side with her and agree that No’elia had fled of her own will. Dae’er knew better, No’elia loved him, she cherished him, she was carrying his pup for Paya’s sake! She wouldn’t just up and leave, that wasn’t like her. If she desired to return home or leave, she would tell him!

“Stop with your lies! She cherishes our kind like they are her own flesh and thwei! She’d never abandon her family and she’d never abandon me. Your twisted little mind has conjured up something, Talia, and when you are revealed for your true nature, it will be I who wields the blade that kills you.” He threatened.

“It doesn’t matter what I say, Prince, but what everyone can see. The evidence is more than enough proof.” She snapped. “Your well trained killing machine, slaughtered my pet then stole a supply pod. It doesn’t matter how many hours you force her to train, how many times you pauk her or how many lessons on Yautja life you teach her, she is ooman and oomans always want to be free.” Talia said and the crowd began to murmur to one another.

Dae’er was getting tired of her lies. She was deliberately trying to turn his people against his mate and he wasn’t going to put up with it. No’elia has worked so hard to gain the respect she had now and he wasn’t going to let Talia tarnish her name with her deception.

Dae’er drew back his right hand and brought down the back of it across Talia’s mandible. She was forced back onto the floor again and this time she kept her face hidden beneath her tresses.

“Has my mate not shown how devoted she is to you all? She’d slaughter a thousand of her own kind to show she desires this planet as her home and you as her family. She’d risk her own life and then some just to gain even a little of your attention. If any of you believe the rubble that spews from this tainted female’s jaws, even for a second, you are giving up on your newfound ju’ha.” He exclaimed as he talked to the crowd, watching their deknas focus on him.

He walked back over to Talia and grasped her tresses in his claws then yanked back her head so that she was looking up at him. “You’ve played a part in this and you best pray to Paya that I don’t figure out what you’ve done for if I do, it will be you who flees and not my mei-hswei.” He said as he shoved her into the floor again, causing a wince to hiss from her.

He went back to the pod and tried to override the command again. Someone very experienced with the supply pods had dispersed this one, he couldn’t even get it to show the planet code that had been set as its destination.

“Bring me an engineer. Someone figure out where this pod has been dispatched to. I want a medical Yautja to examine that ooman and figure out what happened to her.” His servant was the first to leave and then a few others that had been hired for the revelry.

He was still in disbelief that no one had noticed his mate missing until it was too late. He just couldn’t make sense of anything. Why was that ooman pet dead and why was there a missing pod? Was No’elia in it? Her lack of a signal made that a certainty but why would she

even get inside one of them? He immediately suspected a third party since he knew that No'elia didn't know how to work the pods, especially with how well it had been programmed and the ooman pet definitely wouldn't know anything. Not unless someone had shown her.

He kept coming back to Talia. She had desired him since they were pups and even when she was mated she still held a grudge against him. He wouldn't be surprised if she had some how stopped herself from conceiving to get rid of Jae'dar and then she brainwashed her pet to get rid of No'elia.

It was a diabolical plan, he had to admit but perhaps it was too diabolical for the likes of Talia. Pauk, he had to find No'elia. She was probably so frightened and scared. She was probably praying to Paya now that he'd get to her soon. The first thing he had to do was figure out where that pod went and who had sent it out.

He couldn't help but to feel like he was being punished. First his mei-hswei had been sentenced to death but fled and was now a Bad Blood. Then his father tried to make him First Born, the heir to the throne. He'd never be good enough to fulfill that role so figuring out his mei-hswei's predicament was imperative but not as important as finding No'elia.

His entire life had been turned upside down in just a couple of hours. What could the ancestors have planned for him? With such a devastating blow to his life, they must be up to something.

For the first time in his life he felt like he was weak. Frail and small, unable to protect No'elia and unable to help Jae'dar all at the same time. What kind of male was he to allow his female to be stolen or taken away from him? If anything had happened to her, he didn't know what he'd do. Probably take that honorable death right beside his mei-hswei.

Pauk, what was he going to do?

Chapter 24

Thank you for choosing Devotion!

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Erie had fallen asleep for who knows how long and was abruptly awoken when an alarm went off. She was panicking as she couldn't figure out why it was freaking out. There were no buttons to press or switch to flip. What the hell was she suppose to do?

She looked out the small window as the pod whizzed by familiar planets. Saturn, Jupiter, Mars and the moon. That's why the pod was going off, it was arriving at its destination. Now she was panicking for a different reason. She was about to be on a planet she hadn't been on in over a hundred years.

There was no telling how different it was. It could be destroyed or frozen over, dictators could rule the world or worse, it could be exactly the way it was when she left. That was more scary than landing on a destroyed planet, there was nothing more frightening than not knowing how people will react towards you, especially if you're in a space pod flying towards their planet.

She watched out the window as she broke through the atmosphere, passing clouds and falling God knows where. Flames from her rapid falling speed were stretching out the back. She couldn't see anything to try and guess where or what she was heading for. She hoped it wasn't on top of people.

When she didn't see buildings or any sign that she was landing in a city, she was somewhat relieved. The pod made impact, crashing roughly into terrain and rolling. She bounced around and her stomach began to churn from being dizzy. She was thrown against the wall of the pod when it came to a sudden stop.

She pulled herself up to the window and saw fire and what looked like a large field of hay. Now she was in another dilemma, finding a way out of the pod before someone found her. It would be easier to blend in and hide with the public than someone finding her and identifying her as what came out of the falling space pod.

She messed with the door, banged on it with her fists and even kicked it but it wasn't budging. The only way to get out was for someone to let her out. Pauk. This was already going terribly. Surely NASA had already tracked her and was probably looking for her right now.

The sounds of people talking had her frozen in place. Someone was already out there, maybe it's the farmer or owner of the field. Pauk, she was so afraid! Terrified of what they'd do to her or how'd they react.

Their footsteps were making their way around the pod and she saw a splash of water hit a fire right outside but no people yet. Something clanked against the backside of the pod and she began to move. She guessed it wasn't a farmer as the pod lifted up off the ground and was placed onto a semi truck bed.

The sound of several chains dragging over the top of the pod meant they were anchoring it down, preparing to take her somewhere. No one had peeked inside of it yet and she wasn't sure why. She supposed moving it before the public saw anything was more important than inspecting it.

It became pitch black as walls came up around her then the truck began to move. She couldn't help but to cry, she was so afraid, so wanting to be back on Yautja Prime with Dae'er where she was safe. It was ironic how just a year ago she wanted to be here, back on Earth and now she'd give anything to be back with Dae'er.

Seleana. She couldn't believe it, someone she trusted so much had been the one person to take everything from her. This had to be the worst thing that ever happened to her and she had killed people! This whole situation could potentially scar her more than having to live with slaughtering living beings.

She wanted Dae'er and she wanted to go home! She hoped Dae'er would find her soon, a day on Yautja Prime was an eternity on Earth. She hoped that he had already figured out where she was and what happened. Paya, she hoped..

The truck ride was long, hours it seemed, maybe longer. When it finally stopped she was left waiting for another hour. What were they doing out there? The walls came down and the sudden light blinded her briefly.

She struggled to focus her eyes as she looked out the window. People in white hazmat suits patrolled around in what looked like a huge warehouse. There were no windows and the lights were bright fluorescents, the place looked like something out of close encounters.

The chains were removed and the pod was drug down a ramp. The white pants of hazmat suited people came into her window view. She pressed her body against the back of the pod and wished she could melt into it. The person outside bent over and a shielded face stared her right in the eye.

The chatter outside raised as the man alerted his finding. More unfamiliar faces looked at her but she couldn't hear what they were saying about her. A loud clank hit the pod door and she barely got a glimpse of a crowbar as it scraped on the metal of the pod.

This thing was Yautja made, no human tool would get it open and she had no clue how to work it. After the failed attempts with the crowbar and man with a soldering gun tried to melt the door off which of course didn't work either. They tried a super magnet, a better soldering iron, whacked at it with a huge hammer and finally they tried to mess with the control panel. None of that worked and at this point it was safe to assume she was going to be trapped in here forever.

The first man that had peeked in at her was back and looking at her again. His mouth was moving but she couldn't hear what he was saying. She cautiously moved closer and she wasn't sure why she was so nervous, if she can't get out there was no way they could get in to get her.

The male repeated his words, "Are you human?" And she nodded slowly.

"You understand English?" He asked surprised and she nodded again.

He looked up at one of his acquaintances and was talking to them. He looked back at her and pointed down at the control panel.

"How do we get you out?" He asked loudly like she was a foreigner or deaf.

"I-I," she stuttered out and quickly composed herself. "I don't know how." She said and he repeated it to the person still trying to pry the door off.

"A code, we need a code. Do you know of a possible password or code?" He questioned and she shook her head then he relayed her answer again.

She lied, of course, she could think of some codes to put in there but she wasn't so sure she wanted out yet. There was still no telling what they had planned for her or what they wanted to know.

The door clicked and opened and Erie's face lit up with shock. The man gestured at the handle. "All that work and no one thought to use the handle." He smiled.

She looked at him, preparing to strike if he did anything weird. She may be missing her weapons but she still had her strength. He held out his hand to her aiming for a handshake.

"My name's Peter Strite, I work for Weyland Industries. These are my colleagues, Joan Thomas, Bill Bailey, Greg Farley and Nate Owens. We're in charge of figuring out, well basically, figuring out who you are and why you're in this." He said as he rapped his hand on the pod.

Every time he said a name, the corresponding face would peek in at her and wave or say hi. So far they were treating her like a normal human being..so far. She was still severely unsure of the whole situation.

"Can you move? Do you need medical attention?" Peter asked, sounding sincere about her health.

"H-k..no." She almost spoke in Yautja. That might've been bad.

Peter looked at her suspiciously a moment then looked up at Joan. "Well how about coming out of there? We can get you some food or water if you'd like. I know that ride here must've taken a while and you must be at least thirsty."

Erie just stared at him a moment as he smiled at her, trying his best to be polite and friendly. She knew he was only acting that way because it was his job to. She had to do the same thing when she was a nurse. Pretend like she cared way more than she did just so the patient was comfortable and cooperative. This guy was pulling the same trick on her but she wasn't about to fall for it.

"Okay, it's fine if you want to stay in there, I understand this is probably a little strange. I'd feel afraid too if I were you. I'm a little nervous right now and I'm not the one being watched by a dozen people." He chuckled as he looked up at his colleagues and they let out a low forced laughter of agreement.

“What are you going to do to me?” She questioned, cutting right to the chase.

“Well, I’d like to get you a drink and some food. Then we can discuss how you ended up in this ball of metal. If you don’t want to talk about it right now, that’s fine with me, you can take all the time you want but I insist you at least take me up on the first part.” Erie looked at him a moment, thinking about what she should do.

She was trying to buy time, for Dae’er mostly but also to try and test these people. How thin was their patience and how long would they actually leave her in here? They obviously wanted to investigate the pod and figure out what makes it tick but she was also sure they wanted to do the same thing to her. Human’s weren’t like the Yautja, they had no code of honor that they respected. Humans were liars, cheaters and did whatever they could to get what they wanted.

She frowned and slowly made her way out of the pod. Peter held his hand out and some of the others freaked a little from his contact with her. He waved them away and she stood upright, finally being able to stretch after that several hour trip. Pete still held onto her hand and when she realized it she yanked it away frightfully.

He put his hands up in surrendering motion. “I won’t hurt you, I give you my word.” He said.

She didn’t believe him, not for a second. She looked around, taking in her surroundings, counting up the people, marking the exits, something Dae’er had taught her in one of his many lessons. Lots of people in hazmat suits, lots of people examining pieces of the pod that had broken off and even samples of what she guessed was the dirt where she landed.

For the first time in a long time, she was surrounded by people who look just like her. Yet, she was the alien. The uninvited visitor. She was twice, maybe three times as old as these people were and she even felt like it as she looked into each person’s wondering eyes.

“Where did you come from?” Joan asked as she clicked a button on a futuristic looking recorder.

“Here.” She replied and they looked at each other in bewilderment.

“Time travel?” Pete questioned and everyone shifted uncomfortably, well at least she knew they weren’t that ahead in technology. They still believed time travel was possible.

“In a way.” She replied which was the truth, she was from an earlier period on earth so maybe it was kind of like time traveling but not how they were thinking.

“What is your name?” Pete asked.

She stepped forward and they all shifted back away from her. She looked at their faces again, taking in their reactions and trying to guess their thoughts. She saw fear, wonder, excitement and curiosity. Pete seemed to be the only one not reacting to her like she wasn’t human.

“Erie. Erie Windall.” She replied and Pete nodded at Joan who quickly dispersed.

“Erie? Like the Great Lake Erie?” He asked.

She always got that back before she left earth. “Yeah. You said you had water?” She asked.

She watched him walk over to a small fridge beside a desk and pull out a lunch box. He unzipped it and handed her a bottled water. She quickly unscrewed the cap and chugged it down. It'd been forever since she drank water from a bottle and it tasted terribly compared to the fresh water she got on Yautja Prime. She needed water though, the symptoms of dehydration were setting in plus she needed a lot of water for her growing pup.

She wiped her mouth and panted from chugging. Pete was eyeing her, looking her over from head to toe, paying close attention to her mi flower then her mating tattoos.

"Would you like to sit down?" He asked gesturing at a chair.

"No, thanks." She said as she moved closer to the desk and the mob around her moved to make a path.

"So, um, I know you said you were sort of from another time." Pete said as he shuffled through papers and stacked some neatly in a bin. 'Do you think you could elaborate that explanation a little more with detail perhaps? I'm in charge of finding these things out and I'll be honest with you, an alien spacecraft landing on earth doesn't really have people at ease.' He chuckled nervously. "So the faster we can explain your predicament or your reason for coming here, the more smoothly this process will be." He said as he found a recorder similar to the one Joan had earlier.

"I'm a little hungry." She stated as she eyed him like he was stupid.

The less these people knew, the easier it would be to leave them. The conversation never came up about what to say or do if she ever encountered oomans. Why would it? Dae'er probably never thought he would lose her, not in a million years. She wasn't sure if telling them exactly what happened or where she had been these hundreds of years was something that would sit well with her new family.

"Uh, sure, of course. I have leftover lasagna in my lunch here," he said as he rummaged through the squishy blue lunch box. "but you know what, I think Brian was going to run up to Jack In The Box, weren't you, Brian?" He asked and Erie moved her gaze to the chubby male with messy brown hair.

He stuttered and nodded hastily. "Yeah I think I can grab something extra, no problem." He stated.

"You like burgers? Cheeseburgers?" Peter asked.

Holy cow, she hadn't had a cheeseburger in so long. Before she was taken, she had been on a diet for about a year. She had immediately regretted not indulging in those juicy little red meat burgers covered in cheese more often. Yautja meat was always grilled or roasted so there were no fillers or fat that made earth food so delicious.

"Yes! A double cheeseburger." She said. 'With bacon.' Brian nodded and turned to leave. "And curly fries with a coke!" She called out.

"No burgers where you come from, huh?" Pete asked and she shook her head. "You said you were from Earth, which part?"

She thought out all the possibilities her answer could bring about. The only one she could think of was that they'd look her up, possibly have records from when she was here. She

wouldn't be surprised, everything was already pretty technological back in 2014 so all they'd have to do was look her name up in their government system. She took another swig from the bottle in her hand.

"New York." She replied and his eyes lit up with surprise.

"You're from the United States?" He asked suspiciously and she nodded slowly. "We're in Arizona right now. You landed just outside the state. That's why it took so long to get you here. This is just one of the facilities Weyland owns."

"How long will it take for him to return with those burgers?" She asked and he checked his watch.

"Uh, well the place isn't too far about fifteen minutes from here so maybe twenty, give or take a couple of minutes." He replied.

She walked over to a table with several tools laying on top of it. Most were used to try and open the pod but others were some she guessed would've been used on her if she weren't friendly. Bottles of clear medicines, syringes, zip ties and handcuffs. She eyed the stuff then turned her glare at Pete. He chuckled nervously at her discovery.

"Just precautionary items. You never know." He said and she shot him a look of disgust.

The sound of a cell phone going off drew her attention and Pete pulled out a fancy smartphone unlike the ones that existed when she was here. It was so thin and was see through, like a piece of glass. She barely made out the outlines of the phone.

"Excuse me a moment, I have to get this." Pete said as he moved off out of hearing range.

Now was her chance. She went to turn and head for one the exits she saw earlier when she bumped into the guy carrying the food. He dropped a coke and the cup busted as it hit the floor, splattering brown liquid all over the pristine white tiles. Her heart sank a little as the expectation of sipping down a nice carbonated beverage faded away.

"Aw, shit!" The guy exclaimed then he quickly corrected his foul language. 'Shoot! I meant shoot.' He said smiling weakly. "You can have mine." He said as he set down a drink tray and several bags filled with cheeseburger goodness.

He quickly grabbed tissues off the desk and began to poorly clean up the mess. Erie glanced over and saw Pete talking to two doctors. They would periodically look her way and nod at whatever Pete was saying. Erie no longer cared about the burgers and the spilled coke but more of why those doctors seemed interested in her.

After laying the saturated wads of tissues on the desk, Brian began to pull out the food. Erie saw the doctors disperse and Pete went back to talking on his phone. What the hell were they planning about her over there?

"Double with bacon." Brian said as he handed the burger to Erie.

She quickly grabbed him by the crinkly hazmat suit and yanked him closer to her. Fear filled his face as he dropped the burgers he was holding.

"What the hells going on here?" She said angrily and he stuttered out of fright.

“I don’t know! I just got here! Please don’t hurt me, I’m only a scientist!” He defended.

She shoved him into a filing cabinet then fast walked for the exit, keeping her eyes on Pete. She didn’t like his secrecy and she didn’t like his fake front he was so blatantly putting up. He was yelling at whoever was on the phone and she took the opportunity to turn her speedy walk into a sprint.

Some of the other people began to point her out as she whizzed by them. She burst through the door and was in a garage with several cars marked with the Weyland logo. She checked each one for keys but of course they weren’t in there, plus the cars looked so different now, she wasn’t even sure if she could drive one.

She spotted another door at the end of the garage and wasted no time in heading for it. This time when she went through it, there were massive amounts of people and vehicles from the military. It was nighttime and huge street lights beamed down from above. The sound of a helicopter landing deafened her and a humvee drove by. The place where she was was surrounded by a chain link fence wrapped with barbed wire. There was no scaling it and the gate where the car went through were heavily guarded with soldiers.

Where the hell was she? She heard another door open and Pete shouting to the soldiers. She quickly darted to the right, aiming to go around the building but the fence stopped at the corner. She was trapped, like a helpless animal she was cornered.

The soldiers saw her and immediately sprinted over and held her at gunpoint, Pete came forward between the wall of men and acted like he was disappointed. She may be cornered but she could easily snap this guys neck before any of these men could think about pulling a trigger.

“Now, Erie, I tried to be nice to you. Bought you burgers and cokes, even offered you my lunch and all you had to do was cooperate. Instead you repay me by trying to get away.” A soldier came over to tell Pete something and he held his hand up to stop him as he continued with his speech to Erie. ‘All I wanted were answers, just a few questions and this whole situation could’ve been resolved but now,’ He said as he took a gun from a soldier and came closer to Erie. “I don’t think I can trust you anymore.”

He aimed at her and for the first time in a long time fear was taking over her body. Before she could compose herself, he pulled the trigger and she prepared to feel a gunshot blow open her skin somewhere. Instead, she felt a slight sting then enormous pressure on her thigh. She looked down at her leather covering and saw a feathered dart embedded into her flesh. A tranquilizer dart?

Everything seemed to blur and warp as darkness filled her senses. She couldn’t help but to think of Dae’er right now. Where was he? What was taking so long? She’d already been here a few hours and she wondered if he had even realized she was gone yet. Surely he wouldn’t just leave her here..

The last thing she saw was Pete’s pale face staring down at her. She didn’t like this guy and wished she could wrap her fingers around his neck right now. If Dae’er didn’t come for her soon, she was sure they’d throw her in a two by two cell and chain her up like Hannibal. There was no way she was going to go easy. She was going to give them hell or at least go down swinging.

Chapter 25

Sorry for the slow update! I got a review yesterday and it inspired me to update! Sadly, this story is on its final chapters. I'm working on the final one at the current moment but do not fret! There is a sequel inbound and is the culprit behind my lack of quick updates. I want to thank all of my new followers and favorites and the wonderful reviews! You guys are great!

Thank you for choosing Devotion!

*Disclaimer: I do not own Predator, Alien or any character pertaining to the AVP franchise!"

Erie awoke abruptly, her eyes shifted around frantically, trying to see where she was. She couldn't move her arms or her legs and something was holding her neck in place. A bright fluorescent light shined into her eyes and the feel of a pillow under her head confirmed she was in a bed.

She struggled against the restraints, trying to get free but they were solid. On top of the groggy feeling from the tranquilizer shot, she also had a ringing headache. The sound of a door sliding open had her trying to lean up to look and see who or what was coming in to the room with her.

She barely saw Pete in her peripherals and she struggled even harder to get free. She wanted to rip into his chest and yank his still beating heart out. The sound of a chair scraping on the floor echoed in the empty room as he pulled it up next to her. He sat down and she had a perfect view of his ugly face.

"You'll have to forgive the restraints. My colleagues urged me not to but that look in your eyes when you were being sedated..you looked like a wild animal. So for my safety and that of others, I had you restrained." He said as he tapped his hand against the metal on her wrist.

"You best pray I don't get free, for when I am, I will hunt you down and rip your fucking flesh from your fucking bones!" She threatened violently as she tried to get it at him.

"You see, this is why we are where we are. You refuse to cooperate with us and we are forced to these inhumane tactics. If you'd only just listen and answer our questions, we wouldn't have to chain you like an animal." He said as he shuffled through a folder of papers in his hands.

"Even if I decided to answer your questions, you'd still keep me in this hellhole." She replied angrily.

"You'd want us to just let you loose upon the general population? Surely as a person in the medical field you'd understand why we couldn't do that." He said and her eyes looked at him in confusion.

“After much digging and thorough investigating, we found you. It seems you were telling the truth about being from..He turned a paper over and looked at it.” Rochester, New York. You were born to a Mr. and Mrs. Shawn and Cherri Windall on December 14th, 1992. You went to an all girls high school then you attended nursing school at the U of R then proceeded to do an internship at the campus hospital. You lost your father when you were 18 and apparently your mother died shortly after your death in 2014 or at least you were presumed dead after that massacre at the hospital since there were zero survivors. So if I were to ask you questions, I suppose the first one would be, how are you alive today, since it’s been about 130 years since your quote, unquote, death. “He said as he closed up the folder and used his fingers to make invisible quotation marks.

She couldn’t believe he had found so much information or at least the government had kept so much information about her all this time. She wondered if he knew the truth about what happened that night at the hospital or if he was being kept in the dark about aliens invading. She licked her dry lips then gestured for him to lean closer.

He looked at her like she was crazy but leaned slightly closer. She tilted her neck the best she could.

“Go fuck yourself.” She whispered and he jumped back away from her.

“You can be as rude and uncooperative as you want but I’m the one that stands between you and those scientists in there dying to get at you and dissect you like a science experiment.” He said waving his folder around in the air.

She sneered at him and he got serious again. “Don’t think they haven’t noticed that unnatural flower growing from your head. Some suspect your eternal youth is coming from that flower. Talks of removing it and figuring out what makes it tick has already been moved to the top of the list but at this point, I couldn’t care less what they do to you. Let them cut you open, let them remove that fucking weed from your scalp, I’m done.” He said as he stormed out of the room.

Remove her flower? She wasn’t sure how that would go. She had never asked Dae’er what happens when it’s removed. She didn’t want to risk something terrible happening or worse, she die. She knew it provided her with sustenance so removing it would be terrible for her health.

If Pete was telling the truth, then what else were they discussing about her? If they did remove her flower and discovered it wasn’t providing her with her immortality, then what? Would she be next? She tightened her jaw and mulled over what to do. Her only option at this point was to answer Pete’s stupid questions. She’d answer anything not having to do with Dae’er and the Yautja. She could tell them about the mi flower and perhaps even her chronological cessation.

“Alright!” She shouted. “I’ll answer your questions!”

A few moments of silence passed before Pete came back in with his folder and now a recorder. He took his seat again and pulled it close to her bedside.

“You will cooperate now?” He confirmed and she rolled her eyes.

“Sure.” She replied with an annoyed tone.

“You’ll find this whole predicament a lot more smoother now if you keep your word. I’ll ask you questions and all you have to do is answer them. Simple as that but intricate detail would be appreciated.” He stated as he turned on the recorder.

She sighed heavily, hoping she wasn’t going to regret this. “Whatever just get on with it.” She said.

“Now, how have you been able to stay alive this long?” Of course that was the first question he asked, why wouldn’t it be.

“It’s called a chronological cessation.” She replied hesitantly.

Pete looked back behind him like he was looking at someone, then his voice became a lot more curious than it was before. “Chronological cessation, what exactly does that do?” He asked.

“What’s it sound like it does?” She asked with a smart aleck tone.

“It stops time?” He asked.

She sighed heavily. “It’s a process that essentially freezes the body, preserving it perfectly as it is. The organs still function normally but the body is no longer affected by age or illnesses.” She explained.

“You don’t get sick?” He asked.

“Nope, no colds or flus, no cancers or diseases. Stomach problems still occur however and headaches.” She stated, speaking of her current one.

“Can you die?” He questioned as he brought the recorder closer to her face.

She winced and turned her head from it. “Yes, but not from natural causes. A gun shot, falling from massive heights, being stabbed or cut open,” She said raising her voice at the end of her sentence to make sure everyone listening heard that part. “All of the ways a person could possibly die, can kill me, except growing old.” She said.

“How did you receive this chronological cessation?” He asked.

She quieted. She didn’t want to answer this question but she was sure he wouldn’t let her just call a pass on it. He’d certainly overreact again and threaten her with dissection. She couldn’t even think of a good lie right now, not one that didn’t contain the words alien or something else unbelievable.

“It was performed on me.” She began but stopped again.

“Where and by who?” He asked.

“I can’t tell you.” She blurted out.

Pete rummaged through the folder again and pulled out blurry photos of Yautja and kainde amedha. Seeing the Yautja in the pictures reminded her of Dae’er and she nearly cracked from the thought of not being with him. She fought back tears but it was no use. She turned her head away from Pete and the photos to try and hide her tears.

“Based on your reaction you’ve encountered these creatures before. Here at Weyland, we specialize in a little bit of everything. From bath soap to parts for NASA space shuttles so when something like aliens visiting Earth occurs, we are the first ones to find out.” He tucked the photos away. “We’ve been keeping an eye out for these..creatures.. for centuries now. Strange disappearances, exploration missions in South America and Mexico that would completely be wiped out and what witnesses we do manage to find, they all say the same thing. Monsters with acidic blood and scorpion like tails would eat them and use them as hosts for their offspring and then larger different monsters would hunt and kill them.” He closed the folder and leaned over to look at her.

“Now here at Weyland, we value progression and with the technology those creatures have, we could possibly unlock the door to deep space exploration, cures for cancer and other terminal illnesses, perhaps even make life more convenient for everyone in the world. The only problem is that, we’ve never been able to sit down and actually talk to one of these creatures. They’re not exactly up to chit chat with the prey but from the moment I saw that space carrier you arrived in, I knew it belonged to those creatures and that whatever was inside would help answer the questions we’ve all had for centuries. Luckily for me, the cargo spoke English.” He smiled at her and she narrowed her eyes at him angrily, causing stray tears to spill over her cheeks.

So they must’ve knew what happened that night at the hospital and apparently they had been keeping track of the Yautja’s visits to the chiva grounds. Whether they cared or not about the oomans knowing was a different story. They didn’t seem threatened by oomans at all, in fact they felt they were so copacetic that they kept them as pets.

Photos and assumptions were one thing but actually getting their hands on something valuable, now that was something else. They had been so meticulous with their cleanups that they’d obliterate everything to make sure nothing was left for the oomans to collect. The fact that they had her must be a little unnerving for the Yautja. Surely they’d put finding and retrieving her at the top of their to do lists.

“Get to the point.” She mumbled.

“The point is that we know that you were taken by those creatures. I don’t doubt that they performed that chronological cessation on you, but why? Why take you and why perform such an incredible process on you? I saw the way you reacted to those photos. That wasn’t a look of fear or fright, you looked genuinely sad. I can’t help but to wonder..” He said as he leaned over and looked into her eyes. “What happened to you out there?”

She glared at him, threatening him with her eyes and wishing she could just have three seconds of being out of these restraints. Three seconds, that’s all she’d need to pop his little head off his pencil neck. He looked away from her to look back at something again. She tried to see what he was looking at but she saw nothing. A wall with absolutely nothing on it so what the hell was he doing?

“Who are you looking at?” She asked suspiciously.

“It’s no one.” He replied.

“So it’s a person?” She said, satisfied her little trick worked.

The wall must've been fake. A hologram or something, made like a two way mirror. They can see her but she can't see them. She pictured twenty people behind that wall right now, watching her, listening to her speak, watching her fight the restraints like a crazy person and they intended on doing nothing to help her. Humans really were much more frightening than everything else in the universe.

She looked at Pete who was looking like he needed to go to the bathroom. His face was wrinkled and focused then all of a sudden it was normal again. What the...

"Your tattoos, what do they mean?" He asked as he put the recorder close to her face again.

He seemed to be asking all the questions she didn't want to answer right now. "They don't mean anything really." She lied, they mean everything to her. 'You know how people get those little Chinese words tattooed on their body? Peace, love, good luck and all that crap? Well, it's the same thing with these.' She shifted her right arm. "This one means patience."

"Come on now, Erie, I thought you were going to cooperate. Lying isn't cooperating. That writing has already been identified as the monster's language. We've seen this symbol," he said as he lifted her sleeve and grabbed a hold of her bicep, rubbing his thumb on her chiva marking. "On several of the monsters we happened to get a good look at, so there's no need to lie. What we haven't seen, is this many at once." His hand on her arm had her skin crawling.

She kept quiet. There was no way she was going to tell this guy anything. All the tranq shots and dissections in the world couldn't get her to tell him the truth. After a few minutes of utter silence and Pete looking constipated again, he opened his folder and she heard papers rustling around.

"It seems you've run out of time to pick and choose what you want to do. The men above me have decided to just take a look for themselves. Since you being conscious is useless now that you don't want to talk, they don't see a reason leaving you awake." As he finished his statement, the door opened and the sound of two sets of footsteps entered the room.

They were going to knock her out again and this time it wouldn't be just to handle her, they apparently wanted to examine her. The feel of cold gloved hands on her skin had her thrashing the best she could. She writhed and jerked against the metal shackles at her limbs.

She cried out for them to stop but Pete and one of the new guys held her down while the sting of a needle prick had her crying hysterically. Not because it hurt but because of whatever was going to happen after it. If Dae'er were here... if Dae'er were here, he'd never let any of these people hurt her or even think about it for that matter.

He wasn't here though, and it seemed like he was taking his sweet time. She winced as she felt woozy and sleepy from the drugs they put in her arm. She wished Dae'er would hurry up..what could be more important than her at the moment?

She couldn't quite tell what they gave her but she was feeling pretty good. The sound of the door opening and closing was echoing in her ears. Her brain carried the sound and turned it into war drums, beating rhythmically, then unconscious mind was beginning to distract her from the real world.

She hoped when she woke up this time that Dae'er would be storming the halls, set on rescuing her. Her knight in worn black metal armor. Even if he was moving slow on the rescue, she was still dying to see him, quite possibly literally dying. Who knows what they were doing to her body while she was deep asleep. She prayed she wasn't missing a kidney when she woke up..

There was no way of telling what time it was, how many days had passed or how long until Dae'er would be here. It felt like she had been asleep for hours, maybe longer, and she didn't feel well rested or ready to go either, she felt quite shitty.

Erie wanted to open her eyes, take a look at where she was or what had happened to her but she was afraid. She could tell it was dark though, like the lights were out. She was definitely in a bed from the cushioning underneath her, a crappy hospital one but still a bed, and she was covered up with blankets, real ones, not blazing hot fur. She had to admit that she did miss the feel of a nice set of cool crisp sheets on her body but right now, these sheets were more crispy than cool.

Tears were streaming down the corners of her eyes, probably from fear as she wasn't sad..she didn't think? The medicine they used to knock her out and possibly keep her knocked out was making her feel emotional. This always happened to her when she had to have a couple of root canals and a tooth pulled once. As soon as they gave her an IV and injected those drugs, boom, the waterworks were turned on full blast.

She finally opened her eyes and gazed around the room frantically but didn't move. It was a new room, with a solid concrete ceiling that had lights protected by tiny grates, probably so she couldn't get to them to bust them out or something. They were also off leading her to believe that maybe it was night time?

One big thing she noticed was that she was no longer in restraints. Her hands flocked to her neck to feel for the shackle but it was gone and so was something else. She sat up in a panic and the lights immediately came on. Motion sensed and blinding. After a moment to adjust to the new fluorescent sun, she began to rummage through the bed, turning over the pillows and yanking off the sheets, frantically in search of her most prized possession.

She looked around the room and saw a set of sliding doors, the only way in and out. She went to walk over to it and her arm stopped her. They had put an IV in her and she had been given fluids. The IV bags were locked inside of a metal box that was on the wall, her guess was so she didn't mess with them. She quickly yanked out the needle then headed for the door.

She rapped against the glass but she couldn't see anything. The doors that led to her doors had no windows and the small space between her and the second set has nothing but hazmat suits and sinks. She beat against the door harder.

"Hey!" She shouted. "I need to speak to someone. Where's that coward Pete?" She yelled, her words slurring slightly from her groggy drug induced coma.

"Take a seat, Erie." Pete's voice came through from somewhere, an intercom?

She stepped back from the door and looked around. "No," she replied. "Where's my necklace?" She asked.

“You didn’t need it.” He replied and Erie discovered that the speaker was coming from somewhere in the ceiling.

“It’s mine and I demand it back.” She barked.

“I don’t think so, Miss Windall, the time for demands is over. However, if you do wish to see your belongings, your clothes for instance, then you will cooperate. If you want food or water, you will cooperate. If you don’t want us to put you under again and remove those beautiful pink flowers from your scalp, then you will cooperate.” He said sternly.

His words had Erie boiling with rage. What she wouldn’t do to be alone with that guy for just a couple seconds. Just a couple, no more or less, even though she had contemplated torture. Perhaps taking him back with her and selling his ass through the auction house would do him well but that wasn’t her main concern at the moment and neither was her necklace.

It was his comment on her pink flowers. They weren’t supposed to be pink but blood red. She couldn’t see them for there was a lack of mirrors but if they were fading then what did it mean? Lack of nourishment? Did she need food and water? Perhaps whatever they did to her had affected her body and the poor little flowers worked overtime to keep her alive. Or maybe..she paused and swallowed down the fear that had created a lump, maybe something was wrong with the pup inside of her. They had been pumping her full of drugs and doing Paya knows what to her body.

She didn’t want to draw attention to her stomach or the fact she was frightened from her flowers visual warning. She looked around the room, searching for something to distract her nervousness. There was a table, bolted to the floor as well as two bolted down chairs. The bed she was in was bolted to the wall and was worse than a hospital bed. It looked as if the cushion was barely two inches thick and the sheets were those typical hospital sheets that were so crunchy from being bleached so many times. Other than those few things, there was nothing in the room. No decorations, no windows and not even any paint on the walls. It was more like a prison cell than a hospital room.

She wore a hospital gown, with nothing underneath but her cold shivering body. The floor was a cold concrete and she shifted her feet around trying to keep them semi warm. She wondered what they had done to her, what they examined and poked at on her body. There were no rights for her on her own planet of origin anymore. She had been stripped down, physically and emotionally, and she couldn’t handle it anymore.

“What do you want to know?” She asked.

If Dae’er couldn’t understand why she explained him to these torturers then he was better off not coming at all. She had to do what was beneficial to the pup and it seemed answering these oomans questions would guarantee both of their lives. If it wasn’t already too late.

“You want your necklace, so let’s start with it. Where did you get it?” Pete asked, his voice echoing off the empty walls.

“It was a gift, for completing a rite of passage and also for..” She stopped a moment, hesitant about explaining her new life to these barbarians. “For giving my life to another.” She said solemnly.

“You mean one of the creatures?” Pete confirmed.

“Yes and they are called Yautja and they are certainly not monsters.” She said sternly.

“They slaughter humans and remove skulls as prizes but they aren’t monsters?” He asked sarcastically.

“No, in fact, they are more civilized than you and I could ever hope to be.” She replied proudly.

“You speak like you aren’t bothered by these Yautja killing your own kind. Have they brainwashed you? Turned you against your own species?” Pete asked angrily, like he was upset she loved the Yautja more than the oomans.

“If anyone is brainwashed, it’s the inhabitants of this planet!” She exclaimed. “You speak of monsters and slaughter and so easily point out when something else is killing you off when it’s your very own kind that slaughters each other more than any being from space could ever hope to do. You quickly judge a species of superior beings out of ignorance. If you’d inquire more on what kind of people the Yautja are rather than the treasures you might receive, perhaps there would be hope for the humans after all.” Erie said as she paced around, still searching for the exact location of the intercom.

Pete was quiet for a moment and she guessed he was probably discussing her words with his friends. He could say what he wanted all day long but she wasn’t going to listen to him insult the Yautja way of life, a way she cherished more than her old one, that was for sure. Did she miss some things, like the sheets or a cup of coffee or even a bottle of shampoo? Of course, but living without those few things was well worth it. She enjoyed the respect the Yautja gave to one another, whether it was King or Prince or even a merchant in a shop, they looked at each other as equals and if you had a place at the top, it was only because it was rightfully earned and not given, like the people in charge of Earth. She’d take a hardened steel warrior leading her than a man elected by the ignorant population he blatantly couldn’t care less for, any day.

“The necklace inquiry has been set aside and my colleagues are now interested in your statement of these Yautja and their culture or beliefs. Elaboration of these subjects and the ones you were speaking of will ensure the return of your necklace.” Pete finally replied.

Erie walked circles around the spot she thinks the speaker was, but it was concealed like the wall she saw earlier. Some sort of hologram to make it look like it was part of the ceiling concrete.

Erie explained how the Yautja society worked. How the king and the Ancients run the show, how warriors prove their worth through chivas and the hunting grounds. The honor code and how it was stapled into their minds at the earliest age possible and the consequences of breaking it. She even explained how mating works and what it meant to those committing to one another.

Pete had asked during her explanation of the humans in the Yautja’s way of life and she spared no detail on how they were companions and even gave them the reasoning behind chronological cessation and what happens when the master dies. She also explained, in intricate detail, how important it was for the companion to perish with their master. Whether they understood or still found it inhumane was out of her control. She had explained it the best she could.

She told her story on how she came to be with them, how the markings on her skin were proof of her mating to Dae'er and that she was now a princess of the Yautja. She explained how important it was for her to have the necklace back but she did leave out the fact that she was pregnant. What they would do to her if they did, she didn't want to know. If she was forced to stay here the full duration of her pregnancy and had to deliver here, they'd certainly take her pup from her to run experiments in it like they did her. That was a thought she could've lived a million years without thinking of.

"That's all I know. I can answer questions to clarify things but if you believe a word I say, you will know how civilized the Yautja are and how important I am to them. It may seem like I've given up on my own kind but not out of dislike or hatred, but because I've found a better way to live." She explained but they stayed quiet, mulling over her words she guessed.

"Will they come for you?" Pete asked.

Now Erie was the quiet one. She didn't want to start a war nor did she want to jeopardize the humans or the Yautja coming to save her. If she said yes, they could assemble the military, the navy, the national guard and any other soldiers to spare. They could prepare to fight and possibly kill if they didn't believe a word she said.

If she said no, they could dispose of her since she just gave them what they wanted or they run their little experiments to their hearts content knowing that they wouldn't be punished. Paya, what was she supposed to do.

After another moment of thinking, she decided. "Yes, I am certain that will come for me. I am their princess and my mate is the prince. He will come for me and when he does, he won't be too happy seeing me in the condition I'm in." She said with a little threat in her tone.

She wanted to scare them, frighten them into not doing anything drastic or she was possibly shoving them into something drastic. The reward for her threat was much more valuable than the consequence.

She believed in her new people and trusted in their strength. She also knew their ships could arrive on earth and the humans would never know it until they started disappearing and corpses started appearing. No, she had no doubt in her choice and that it was the right one.

"Your prince, would he trade you for something?" Pete asked and his words surprised her but it was short lived as she recalled him mentioning they wanted some of their technology.

They probably wanted some of their medicine or weapons and she knew that Dae'er would gladly make a trade, he'd possibly hand over his ship for her but she also knew that he could just waltz in and take her too. These people behind the fake concrete walls was more ignorant than she thought. She has literally just explained how strong and powerful they were and now they're hoping for a trade, a few vials of pain reliever for their princess?

"I'm sure he would." She replied, Knowing that her Yautja wouldn't even consider a trade and will just take her from them.

"When he comes to get you, we will offer a trade. The item we desire will be kept in confidentiality until then. For now, I've given you my word." As Pete spoke she saw a person come into the doors outside of her cells doors.

It was a woman, wearing a hazmat suit and carrying a covered tray and a large yellow envelope sat on top of it. Her necklace had to be in it and the tray probably had food.

“Stay away from the door while she slides the tray through.” Pete said and Erie did as she was told.

When the small panel, barely big enough for the items the girl was holding to fit through, opened, the girl shoved the stuff in then quickly left. Erie dashed over and ripped open the envelope and dumped her necklace into her hand. She felt like she was being reunited with Dae’er in a way as she kissed the pendant then fastened the necklace around her throat.

“Your reward for cooperating. We have more inquiries but for now we will contemplate on the information you have given us.” Pete said and she knew he was gone.

She didn’t care if that guy crashed his car on his way home. In fact she kind of wished for it. She understood that he was probably a messenger but still, he didn’t have to be so douche-y.

She picked up the tray and carried it over to the table. When she lifted the lid her mouth watered when she saw that Jack in the Box burger from before, curly fries and all. She picked it up and took a couple big chomps from it and then took a huge swig from the soda. It was room temperature and not as good as she remembered it to be, but still worth it.

She wanted to caress her stomach and soothe her growing pup but who knew if they were still watching. She wished she could see it, hear it’s tiny heartbeat and watch it pump wildly through her bio mask. What a wonderful sight it was to see it so full of life when it had barely even begun to live. What was more astonishing was that she created it! Her and Dae’er, together, with a little help of course, but still, it was truly a miracle and she hardly believed in those.

In her mind, she talked to the pup, pleading for it to be strong and to hold on until Dae’er came for them. Perhaps he was having more trouble figuring out what happened to her than she thought. Seleana did say that she has studied those manuals like she was taking a test the next day. Maybe Dae’er was having trouble finding someone as knowledgeable as she was.

The whole situation was stressing her out and she could no longer eat. She plopped the burger down after taking another drink of the soda then walked over to the bed. She curled up in a ball under the blankets and cried some more. She hated it here, she wanted her pallet of furs and her warm Yautja male beside her.

She couldn’t help but to regret not wearing her armor to the revelry. Dae’er had tried to get her to but she wanted to look nice not scary. Damn her girly habits. If she had her armor and weapons, she could’ve called to Dae’er by now and even killed every asshole in this place. She probably never would’ve left Yautja Prime. She doubted the tracker in her arm gave off a strong enough signal for him to use. It was designed to keep track of things in close vicinity not light years away.

It just goes to show that you should always be prepared, even at your own party because you never know who will betray you. She had certainly learned her lesson today. Never again will she leave Dae’er’s home without being in full armor and have every single weapon attached to every inch of her body. If she was captured again, it’d be because she was standing in front of Centanu, that was a guarantee.

Chapter 26

Yay! A quick update! Thank you for the reviews and the new follows! There's only one more chapter after this one so I hope everyone has enjoyed my story as much as I've enjoyed writing it. You guys are the best and like I said, there is a sequel! So once I get the last chapter to Devotion posted, I won't waste time in getting the sequel's first chapter posted.

Thank you for choosing Devotion!

Disclaimer: I do not own Predator, Alien or any character pertaining to the AVP franchise!

Dae'er paced back and forth beside the Yautja trying to break through the pod's control panel. He'd been at it for a few hours and hadn't made any progress. Dae'er was no closer to finding No'elia than this male was to getting the coordinates. His anger flared up and he drove his fist into a nearby panel.

"What is taking so long?!" He snarled and the male flinched from his aggression towards him.

"I'm trying my best, sire, it's just, whoever overrode the code has buried the coordinates so deep into the system that I have to literally sort through thousands of numbers. I'll be honest, Prince Dae'er, when I do make it through the codes, the coordinates will only be partials. The hacker has shredded everything in the system and its been feeding me partials since I started." The male said as Dae'er watched the numbers on the device the male had hooked up to the control panel roll through numbers.

"Define partial." He growled.

"It'll only be half of a set, sire, the quadrant and perhaps the galaxy if we're lucky." The male replied as he wrote down every other set of numbers.

He'd scour every planet in this universe to find No'elia then he'd wring the neck of whoever did this to her. Dae'er looked up to see one of the medical Yautja heading his way. He greeted Dae'er then pulled up a hologram of what he had found.

"The cause of thei-de for the ooman companion was suicide." Dae'er huffed as he watched the hologram reenact the lou-dte kale ooman's death. "The dagger was gripped in both hands then stabbed repeatedly into her abdomen. She died from internal bleeding." The medical Yautja said as the hologram repeated its show.

"The thwei belonged only to the dead ooman lou-dte kale?" Dae'er asked.

"Sei-i, your majesty, none of the thwei belonged to the ju'ha." The male's words were a relief but it still didn't explain why any of what happened, happened.

“Do you know why she took her own life?” Dae’er asked, hoping the medical worker could shed some light on anything.

“H-ko, I do not but from my experience with ooman companions, losing the n’yaka-de is traumatizing for the companions. They become unstable and emotionally compromised. Most end up like our current issue while others are so belligerent, they end up being euthanized anyway.” The male turned off the hologram. “I can’t stop a n’yaka-de from passing on his companion but I can recommend that it not be done. If you desire information, I’d start by confronting her current n’yaka-de. If anyone knows about a change in her behavior, it’s the new n’yaka-de.”

Dae’er mulled it over. There was no way in hell he’d ask Talia for anything. She probably wouldn’t even answer his questions and his mei-hswei was long gone. He didn’t have a choice though, if the lou-dte kale ooman companion had anything to do with Noelia’s disappearance or the pod then it was imperative that he knew of it.

“Thank you. If I have any questions I’ll send for you.” Dae’er said as the worker bowed then dispersed.

He watched the engineer for a moment then headed for Talia’s dwellings. He prayed to Paya he didn’t regret this. Talia lived amongst several other aristocratic lou-dte kale. The entire wing was full of them and right now, they all peeked outside their doorways, watching him storm his way to Talia’s.

He approached the door and tried the keypad, he wasn’t surprised when it opened for him. He hoped Talia hadn’t already headed back for the citadel as he entered the front room of her dwellings. The putrid h’dui’s of fragrances were stinging his senses as soon as he stepped foot in the home.

He looked around and heard her humming in one of the rooms. He glanced around, looking for any indication that her lou-dte kale ooman companion spent any time in here.

“Prince Dae’er.” Her voice said as he turned to see her barely covered.

He chuffed and growled, a sign that he didn’t like her blatant lack of coverings. She didn’t seem to care about his warning as she swaggered over and leaned against a table, causing her breasts to protrude outwards. He kept his deknas stern and away from her.

“Have you come to apologize?” She asked.

“H-ko, any actions I’ve had towards you will never be regrettable.” He snarled.

“Is that so? I wish I could say I felt the same about my actions towards you.” She purred out with a seductive tone, her desperate stench permeated the room worse than her wretched perfume.

“I’m not here to listen to your endless worthless prattle, Talia, I desire information on your ooman companion.” He said firmly.

She clicked her tusks together and crossed her arms. “She was always afraid, always crying and sniveling. She was just a waste of space. I feel sorry for Cetanu.” She said as she swayed over to a rack that held different flavors of c’nlip and poured herself some in a chalice.

“She didn’t change dramatically or become l’ulij-bpe?” Dae’er asked.

“H-ko, like I just said, she was constantly depressed. Cjit, I even avoided her because her quiet crying was so annoying. If anyone knows of any changes, it’d be your mei-hswei.” Talia said as she threw back her head and chugged down the contents of the c’nlip.

“My mei-hswei has problems of his own at the moment, they should be your problems as well but it seems you’re as carefree as the wind through the trees.” Dae’er said as he headed for the door.

Talia quickly moved in front of him, blocking his path and he let out a low steady growl. He didn’t feel like dealing with an intoxicated Talia especially not alone. He stepped forward to shove past her and she placed those clammy hands on his chest to keep him from going forward. He looked down at her with a death threat in his deknas.

“Why don’t you stay for a little while? Some things about the little ooman are beginning to come to mind.” She taunted at him.

He pushed her hands off his chest. “H-ko.” He said as he tried to get by, only to be stopped again.

He’d had enough of this desperate lou-dte kale and he roared as he shoved her against the door violently. “You’ve tested my patience once already today and I won’t hesitate to end you here and now. There isn’t hard evidence yet but I doubt that you didn’t have a hand in my mates disappearance. If you desire h’chak, you will speak of what you know.” He said as he pressed his forearm harder against her collarbone, the bones began to cave against his pressure.

She was hissing and whining in pain and her hands were trying to shove him away. He wasn’t going to let her go though, not until her collarbone snapped or she told him what she was withholding. He shoved a little harder and she let out a high pitched wail. He couldn’t kill her, it was considered dishonorable and he’d end up like his mei-hswei but there was nothing about maiming her.

“I’ll tell you!” She cried out and he eased off slightly. “She used to spend a lot of time in my father’s library before he died and before they cleared it out, she took a few books.” She spoke quickly and with panic.

“What do books have to do with anything?” He asked.

“You questioned whether or not her behavior changed and it did. She used to read them from time to time but after the hunt at the game preserve, she began to write in them. Day and night she’d be scribbling in those books. I thought she was just being an ignorant ooman, I didn’t know it was cause for concern.” She explained and Dae’er eased up off her chest.

She huffed and straightened herself up trying to compose herself. She sucked in hard breaths and whimpered but he couldn’t care less about hurting her. He wanted those books.

“Where are they?” He asked and she nodded towards a leather satchel sitting on the table between the couches.

He walked over and picked up the bag. Inside were several books, one thick one, a few thin ones and a leather bound one. He pulled out one of the thin ones and it was a guide for

the Yautja honor code. Interesting. He set it on the table and pulled out the thick one. His heart raced as he read the words on the cover.

It was a manual for the supply pods. He tucked the bag under his arm and opened the book. She had written all over the pages. Every single blank space was filled in with poor drawings of her master and tons of words written in Yautja and her racial language. She had written part of the sentences in Yautja and the other parts in ooman. He saw No'elia's ooman name several times. He couldn't believe what he was reading and he found it even more difficult to believe that No'elia trusted this person.

Her writings were filled with jealousy, rage, hatred and loathing for No'elia. She'd write down what they had discussed and then added reasons as to why she hated her. From him training No'elia, to what she was wearing that day, just pages and pages of how this ooman despised his mate. It saddened and angered him at the same time.

No'elia trusted this piece of rubbish and it seemed the more she put her faith into the female the more she loathed No'elia. He wanted to rip it to shreds, burn it and bury it and pray to Paya that No'elia never laid deknas on it but it was the only hope he had of figuring out where his beloved was.

There were several pages that had bent corners, markers for sections the companion wanted to find again. Talia was looming over him, her presence annoying him more and more. She must've read what he was as she huffed and went over to get a freeze pack for her chest.

"It seems I'm not the only one envious of what your new mate has received." She said as she popped the seal on the pack and laid it against her shoulder. 'At least I wasn't afraid to admit it. Scribbling about it in a book?' She huffed again. "S'yuitde."

Dae'er ignored her as he continued to check each folded page, looking for some clue or hint of what she had done to No'elia. Talia walked over and picked up the book he had laid down first and began to flip through the pages.

"Paya, she wrote in this one too. What a deranged little creature." Talia said as she dropped the book back on the table and sat back on the couch indolently.

Dae'er picked up the book and looked through it. More scribbles and useless information. He quickly pulled out more and more books, looking through them for help. When he pulled out the leather bound one, he paused. It was her master's diary, a record of his younger days and feats. It would be disrespectful to open it and read it but he had to if he wanted to find No'elia.

He opened the diary and saw dried ooman thwei over every page. It was even more unsettling than the others. Hand prints, hair and some looked as if they had gotten wet at some point as they were crinkled and wavy. He turned to a page that was separated from the others and he barely got a glimpse of what looked like a small th'syra smashed into the page before it crumbled and fell to the floor. What in Paya was going on?

He read the page where the skull was and it was the most terrifying story he had ever laid eyes on. Apparently him and No'elia and the other females weren't the first to try out Pilo's experiment. The female ooman had conceived multiple times, the th'syra that was now dust

on Talia's floor was the last attempt and the best. According to the diary, Seleana had lost twelve pups and eventually was rendered unable to carry the pups anymore so they gave up.

Apparently, the Ancient cared for the female more than he led on. The diary was full of entries of her and how he kept his forbidden admiration for her secret. That explained her jealousy for No'elia, over five hundred years of being with her master and not once had he defended her honor. Then No'elia comes along and Dae'er set her on a pedestal. It must've done quite a number on Seleana, to be told they had to keep quiet of their hearts fondness for one another but then watch as Dae'er and No'elia's was flaunted about.

It was tragic, he had to admit and it was obvious the female companion had done something to the pods. Dae'er imagined she had fooled No'elia into following her, why would she expect deception? She probably cared for Selena as much as she does for him. She probably convinced or shoved No'elia into the supply pod then corrupted the code and sent her off into the universe somewhere.

He got to the back of the diary and his assumption was confirmed when he saw familiar drawings of the pod and several lines of inputs for the control panel. He ripped out the pages of code and planned on taking it to the engineer in hopes he could decipher it.

"Well, why'd the ignorant zabin off herself?" Talia asked as she watched Dae'er shove the books back into the bag.

"She missed your sire." Dae'er replied honestly.

"That makes two of us." Talia said as she stood up when she saw Dae'er going for the door. 'Where are you going?' She questioned. "And what do I do with the books?"

"I need to get these to the engineer and burn them. Burn every one of them. They're useless now." Dae'er replied as the door closed behind him.

He still disliked Talia and he wished she would've just cooperated and told him about the books to begin with. He practically had to strangle the information out of her. Thinking about how he almost ended up with her made him appreciate No'elia even more and how respectful she was towards him. She'd never withhold such important information from anyone if it meant saving a life.

His heart sank a little more as he longed for No'elia. Lack of hearing her gentle voice and feeling her soft warm body was like missing limbs, he just couldn't function well without them. Once he found her, he'd never leave her alone again, ever.

His only concern at the moment was that she could be light years away. Time on almost every planet was different. While she had only been missing for several hours here, time could be flying by slowly somewhere else. He thought of No'elia sitting on a planet, watching days, weeks, months maybe, just crawling by, while she waited for him to find her. He gripped the papers in his fist and hoped that she hadn't driven herself mad being without him like the other female companion had.

Dae'er approached the engineer and he stood up abruptly from his crouch, looking like he had news. "My liege! I've managed to get the partials for her location and I've overrode the return command. We can alert the carrier to return to the citadel but there's no guarantee she

will be in it.” His face went from excited to solemn as he spoke but, Dae’er had hopes, high hopes.

“Do it.” He said as he unfolded the papers and held them out to him. “I managed to locate the codes used to hack the supply pods control panel.” The male took them and skimmed over the Yautja writing.

“Paya..this.” He paused as he looked over it some more. “I’ve never seen such well made codes. I’ve got the reputation to prove my skills in engineering but this, this exceeds anything I’ve ever laid deknas on. Whoever wrote this..” He began but Dae’er had heard enough of No’elia’s deceptive friend.

“She’s dead and let’s stay focused on the here and now.” Dae’er said sternly and the male nodded.

“Sei-i, forgive me. I’ll put in the command for return then try to restore the control panel to its original state with these codes.” The male said as he held up the papers and turned to immediately start working.

The control panel let out a loud alarm sound then a red light began to blink. The male put in more code via the item he had hooked up earlier to the control panel and the red light blinked faster.

“I’ve increased its speed. I can’t determine the eta though, as where it is is still unknown. It could be here in five minutes or five hours.” The engineer said as he went to work with the codes he gave them from the diary.

“What of the codes? How long do you think it will be until you determine its location?” Dae’er asked as he loomed over the male, anxious to see what he was doing.

“Not too long, whoever wrote this was good but I’m good as well.” He boasted as he punched in numbers and the panel chirped. The male picked up the device he was using to gather codes and watched it for a moment. “We’ve got the first coordinate your highness.” He said as he immediately wrote down the number.

He handed the glass tablet to Dae’er and he practically snatched it from his hand he was so eager to find No’elia. Coordinates for ships and supply carriers worked the same, the first set of numbers and letters ranged from one to the thousands. Anything less than five hundred meant it was really old, five hundred to a thousand meant somewhat new. A first coordinate with a lot of letters instead of numbers indicated the planet had a low population and vice versa.

The second and third set, which Dae’er lacked, were the most important. The second set was the galaxy and quadrant and the third set was the number of the planet. Yautja Prime’s coordinates are: 215.j6754, 523-4, 7563d. The numbers could be incredibly long, especially with a new planet. Yautja prime’s coordinates is considered one of the shortest ones in existence.

As Dae’er looked at the first set of the coordinates, he knew the planet was fairly new and overpopulated. Some planets immediately came to mind but he couldn’t just spring into action and check them. Without a quadrant or at least a planet number, he’d be wasting his time. He also didn’t want to leave in case No’elia arrived in the supply pod.

He handed the tablet back to the engineer and he immediately began to scribble on it. "The next code is a little more tricky. It might not make sense but shorter numbers tend to take longer to solve as the system likes to start at the top and work itself down." The engineer explained.

"Why is that?" Dae'er asked, a little perturbed he couldn't fix the problem.

"Well, if you think about it, there are millions and millions of planets, new planets everyday which means new coordinates. As a new planet comes into existence the system creates a new set of numbers. It's basically going from newest to oldest because the newest was what the system most recently read." The engineer explained.

"Sei-i, the planet No'elia's on is fairly new so perhaps it won't take as long." Dae'er stated.

"Unless it's a planet that was born recently but in an old Galaxy and quadrant. In which case, it could take quite a while." The male's words had Dae'er's anger flaring up again.

He was always so pessimistic, it was bothering Dae'er beyond belief. Why couldn't he just let Dae'er enjoy the hope of No'elia being returned to him sooner than later? He had no choice but to deal with him, he was the best engineer Yautja Prime had. If he requested someone else, they could take twice as long and that's twice as long in finding his mate. He'd have to just find patience around the male, the patience to not rip his head off.

"My liege." His servant's voice distracted his daydream of beheading the engineer and had him turning on his heel. The servant lowered his shoulders to show obedience and Dae'er nodded at him to continue. "Your sire has requested your attention. He's waiting in your dwellings."

Dae'er looked back at the engineer and he seemed hard at work with the diary entries. He stared at the little red blinking light over the empty hole where the supply pod would go. He really didn't want to leave this spot unless it was to retrieve No'elia. He growled out of aggravation. What could his sire possibly want?

"I'll be back. Notify me immediately if anything changes." He instructed and the engineer nodded at him.

He stormed passed his servant and the small male fast walked behind him to keep up. His father had already increased the cursed day Dae'er was experiencing, what else could he possibly have to say.

He entered his dwellings and a thought occurred to him. He turned to his servant and pointed back down the hall. "Go to the engineer and wait there. Watch him and if anything happens, alert me." His servant nodded then took off in a run back down the hall.

His sire was seated on the couch and was sipping c'nlip from a chalice. When he saw Dae'er enter the room he set his cup down and stood abruptly.

"My son, have you found No'elia yet?" He asked with a look of sincerity in his eyes.

"The engineer is still working on getting the coordinates from the supply carrier." He explained.

His tusks loosened and a look of sadness came over him as he sat back down. It was difficult for Dae'er to see his father so emotional lately. All his life his father had been a stern calloused sain'ja but now, he acted as if it was his own mate that was missing.

He knew his father cherished No'elia like his own kin but he'd never thought he'd see his father so concerned for her. Especially after he had thrown her into the game preserve. He was pretty lenient when it came to situations dealing with her though, like the mating and the training and also how he flaunted her around like she wasn't a companion or ooman at all.

Dae'er knew it was because No'elia reminded his sire of his long lost ooman but to be this sad for No'elia..it was a bit alarming. Dae'er walked over and peered into his father's chalice. It was still relatively full, so he wasn't intoxicated. He stepped back from his sire and watched attentively as he buried his face in his palms and rubbed his temples.

"What is wrong with you?" Dae'er questioned suspiciously.

His father looked up at him and shook his head. "Nothing Dae'er, it's just with your brother and now your mate, it is all very overwhelming on an old soul like mine." He replied.

Dae'er stepped back further and nearly tripped from being startled. His father had just admitted his frailty? Just like that? No torture or persuasion, just announced it before Dae'er like it wasn't a big deal.

He stared at his father, still in shock of what he admitted. Yautja Warriors, especially the King, never admit their weaknesses nor show it for that matter. To hear his father say it and look it meant only one thing..

"H-ko, you aren't putting this on my shoulders right now! I've got too much as it is!" Dae'er barked.

His father's colorful bands shined as he stood up slowly from his seat again. His tresses slowly cascading over his shoulders as he stiffened them, standing up tall. He approached Dae'er and laid a hand upon his shoulder firmly then he looked him in the eyes.

"I can not lead our people any longer. It is time for.." His father began but Dae'er wouldn't hear it.

"H-ko! It is *I* who can not lead!" Dae'er shouted as he knocked his father's arm from his shoulder and turned away. "You must wait until Jae'dar returns." He said more calmly.

"I saw in your deknas that you know what I must do, what I've known for the past month." His father said and Dae'er snarled and moved further from his father, not daring to even glance back at him. "Look at me, son! My heart is heavy for the loss of my first born and your missing mate. A heart this easily moved can not lead our kind, they need a firm hand and it pains me to say that mine is no longer steady."

Dae'er couldn't do this, not now, not with his pup heavy mate missing. He couldn't make kingly decisions when he had his own troubles to worry about. He didn't have the training or the experience like Jae'dar had from the time he was born. He was being tossed into the fire, covered in fuel, destined to burn alive.

"I can't do it, father, I've been taught and raised to fight, not lead." Dae'er said as he still kept his eyes away from his father.

“You are a natural born leader. I saw it the moment your mother birthed you and you were put into my claws.” His father said as he approached Dae’er from behind. “You were small and frail but you looked up at me with the fire of a hardened sain’ja and the color to prove it.”

Dae’er turned to look at his father, interested in what he had to say. He had never heard the story of his birth nor of his mother. He never got to see his mother as she greeted Cetanu on the day of his birth. He had only seen images of her and his father still had her image all over the citadel. So she was gone but never forgotten and hearing his father speak of the last memory of her, well, Dae’er had to at least look at the male.

His father turned his tusks up into an Yautja smile. “The feel of your heart against my palms, strong and vibrant so full of life! It was the heart of a king.” His father opened his hand wide then closed it into a fist to lay it across his chest. “When your mother left to join Cetanu and Paya, the Ancients were all moved, for only strong, prodigal warriors are born at the death of their mother. It was whispers amongst the loud, that you should’ve been my heir, but the laws were as strong as you were. Hearing of Jae’dar’s natural cause for being outcasted was a hardship for me but it also seems Paya has set your path in the right direction.” His father said as he approached Dae’er and lifted his hand up.

“She has been watching over you, gave you precious gifts like your ooman mate and pup, held your life above all others just so you could be where you are now, my son.” His father placed the First Born medallion in Dae’er’s palm and closed his fingers around the warm metal, heated by his father’s hands.

His sire’s words were inspirational. Paya, choosing his fate from the day he was born, the death of his mother, a sign that he was supposed to be where he was now but he couldn’t help but to wonder why Jae’dar had to suffer and why No’elia had to be taken from him. Was this Paya’s plan as well and if it was, what did it mean?

He tightened his hand around the medallion, clutching it firmly, showing he was accepting his new position. If it was true that he was chosen by a deity to lead, then there was no way he could fail. He wasn’t just accepting the role of First Born and heir, but as it stood, his father was also stepping down from the throne. After today, Dae’er would be king, No’elia Queen and their pup would be the next heir to the throne.

They were changing history, never had a First Born been found guilty of anything. Never had an ooman had power such as No’elia’s, over Yautja and never had an ooman born pup be destined to rule over Yautja.

Dae’er looked at his father and he nodded at him. “I accept your role, sire. I’ll lead our kind to the best of my ability and if Paya is truly watching over me, then my ability will be even greater.” Dae’er said as he bowed to his father.

“H-ko, it is I who should bow to you.” His father said as he dropped to one knee and bowed to Dae’er, a sight he never thought he would see, not in a million years.

“What happens now?” Dae’er asked.

“I’ve already notified the Ancients of my resignation. I’ve declared you my heir and I’ve already signed the proclamation. A coronation will be held for you as soon as you find No’elia of course. After that, you will pick up where I left off.” His father said as he stood and sat back down in the chair, continuing to sip his c’nlip.

“What of you? What will become of you?” Dae’er questioned.

“The same thing that happens to all old kings, I’ll join the Ancients when I’m ready but until then I think I’ll lavish that new pup of yours.” He said as he trilled softly and relaxed into the chair more.

Dae’er enjoyed hearing his father speak of his pup so highly. His sire cared about it and the gender was still unknown. He placed the medallion around his neck and the sound of the door opening drew his attention.

His servant was out of breath as he panted out his news. “The pod, it’s arrived!” He exclaimed and Dae’er bolted out of his dwellings.

The only thought on his mind as he ran was of No’elia. Was she in there? Was she injured? Perhaps the journey was too much for her and she had moved on to battle Cetanu. That thought had him moving faster, zooming by people as they watched him go.

The engineer was securing the pods arrival when Dae’er approached the port. He immediately went to the window and what he saw wasn’t his beloved. The engineer opened the pod door and its new passenger scrambled to the back of the pod and stared at Dae’er like he was Cetanu himself.

“Where am I?” The ooman male asked as he pressed his body against the back of the pod.

“Where did you come from?” Dae’er asked and the male looked even more afraid.

Pauk, he didn’t have his bio mask on. He squatted down and motioned with his hand for the ooman to come to him but of course he didn’t obey. It was no effort whatsoever to reach in and drag the screaming male out by his strange white coverings. He tossed him to the floor and the smell of defecation filled the air.

His servant bristled from the stench and the engineer backed away from the writhing male. He tried to scramble away but Dae’er planted a foot firmly on his chest, holding him in place. He looked at his servant.

“Retrieve my bio mask.” He ordered and the servant made a beeline down the hall towards his quarters.

The male was begging for his life, sniveling and whimpering. There was no way of knowing which ooman planet he came from, not without his mask. Dae’er looked down and saw a tag hanging from his coverings. He quickly ripped it from the white cloth and examined it. There was a picture of the male, as well as a giant letter that resembled peaks of a mountain.

No’elia had offered to teach him her native tongue but he had denied since it was such a useless language. She spoke Yautja so there was no need for learning her language. She’d often spout obscenities if she were upset or when she hurt herself during training. Those words he knew all too well but outside of curses, he knew not one syllable. He made a mental note to take No’elia up on her offer of teaching him the language.

His servant didn’t take very long and when he came within reach, Dae’er grabbed his mask and placed it on. It immediately did a reading on the male, he had a mass the size of a jelly

fruit in his gut and it was fatal. The male would perish within the next few years so if he happened to die on Dae'er's watch, it would be considered mercy.

The male's pleas and cries for help became understandable. Dae'er wasn't interested in helping him but how he could help Dae'er. He kept his foot firmly on the male's body.

"Where did you come from?" Dae'er repeated.

The male stuttered out of fear and Dae'er roared from impatience.

"Earth! I'm from Earth." He cried.

"You were in this pod when it left from Earth?" Dae'er clarified.

"Yes!" The male shouted. "Please don't kill me."

"When you found the pod, was there anything inside?" Dae'er continued with his interrogation.

"I wasn't there. I was only told to strip it down and find out how it works." The male explained.

"You know nothing of a passenger?" Dae'er asked.

"There was mentioning of a girl but like I said I was only assigned to the spacecraft! I know nothing about her." The male's eyes were lit up with fear.

"I show you a map of your planet, you show me where you came from, where the pod took off." He said as he opened his wrist gauntlet and revealed the spinning blue planet of Earth.

The male was shaking as he pointed at the land where he found No'elia. Dae'er zoomed in, showing the separate territories. The male pointed again but where he selected was nowhere near where he found his mate. It was more to the west and slightly south.

"Again." Dae'er ordered and the male pointed a smaller area. "This is where you were when the pod took off?" Dae'er confirmed.

"Yes. Please don't kill me. I had nothing to do with what happened to the girl. I was only told to strip the craft." He sobbed.

The male's words were like fuel on the fire, he crouched down and yanked him violently up off the floor. "What happened to the girl?" He growled out.

"I've only heard rumors from the department in charge of her. They spoke of experimentations and discovering how she doesn't age." The male was spewing information like a busted dam.

"What was the last rumor you heard?" Dae'er bellowed.

The ooman male winced and cowered before speaking. "They had tried to remove that strange flower from her head but it released a poisonous gas and killed about six people." He spoke fast and Dae'er shook him and he went back to begging. "Please don't kill me, that's all I know, I swear. Please!"

The male was of no use to him anymore. The area he had pointed at was small enough for No'elia's tag to light up and direct him to where she was. This male had a hand in whatever

was done to his mate, even if it was just taking apart the carrier. If No'elia had managed to get away she couldn't leave because this male would've taken apart her only vessel. So to Dae'er, he was just as guilty as anyone who had laid a hand on her.

Dae'er pulled a dagger from a sheath on his belt. The male eyed it and began to panic underneath his hold, begging and pleading even more than before. Dae'er ignored his cries and drove the blade up his abdomen, shoving it hard when he hit the heart. The male's mouth drooped open as his eyes stayed wide and focused on nothing.

Dae'er retrieved his dagger and sheathed the blood covered blade. The engineer was speechless and his servant began to drag the body off. Dae'er looked at the engineer and growled.

"Fix the control panel then return to your normal duties. Your services are no longer required." He stated as he immediately went to his dwellings.

His father was still waiting, eager to hear any news of No'elia. He stood from his seat and followed Dae'er into his room.

"Well? What of No'elia?" He questioned as Dae'er quickly put his awu'asa on.

"I've located her, she's on her home planet. They've been experimenting on her so I must get to her quickly." Dae'er said as he locked his wrist blades into place.

"Experimenting? What kind of experiments?!" His father exclaimed.

"It's unclear what they've done to her but as Paya as my witness, I'll skin everyone that laid so much as a glare on her." Dae'er said firmly as he placed his polearm on his back.

"I'm coming with you." His father stated.

"H-ko. It is my job as her male to rescue her. A bunch of civilian oomans are roaches compared to the foes I've encountered and they'll be just as easy to kill as well." He replied as he sheathed a plasma gun on his belt. "I want you to prepare for her arrival. She may be injured so have the medical bay ready to go." Dae'er said as he fastened the last piece of his awu'asa on then headed for the door.

"I'll be waiting." His father replied and Dae'er nodded at him before exiting and making his way to the port.

Here, on Yautja Prime, No'elia had only been gone about seven hours but on Earth, she'd been there almost a month. There was no telling what she'd been through. There was one thing he could guarantee, it was that whoever decided to harm No'elia, would rue the day. He'd make sure each and every ooman experienced as much torture as No'elia had.

Chapter 27

This is it! The last chapter! I want to apologize for it being so short, I toyed with it and toyed with it and this is the best I could do. I didn't want to give away too much for the sequel, which is being posted at the same time! Yay!

So I hope everyone has enjoyed Devotion and I want to thank everyone that has followed, favorited and reviewed! You guys are the best and without you I wouldn't have finished this story. I appreciate every single one of you and I hope to see some of you again later on!

Thank you! for choosing **Devotion!**

*I do not own Alien, Predator or any character pertaining to the AVP universe!"

The light in the room came on as soon as Erie turned over. She cursed and winced as she rolled into a ball and covered her head. She was feeling like crap from morning sickness and even though she was only a few weeks into her pregnancy, she had a belly the size of a cantaloupe. Pilo had mentioned that the gestation for Yautja and human babies would be much faster due to how much smaller humans were compared to Yautja.

She'd been here a little over a month and endured interrogation after interrogation. It was the same useless questions over and over again, like somehow she would change her answer if they just asked it once more. She didn't though and one day she grew tired of their monotony and lashed out at old Pete.

That day cost her her mi flower. During its removal, it showed an ability she wasn't aware of. While she found it comical that the flower's poison gas took out half a dozen doctors, Pete and his friends did not. They left her in an isolation cell for a week and sadly during that time, her secret pup began to show itself.

After that, it was more probes, more questions and more sedations. Who knows what they did to her or her pup while she was K.O'd and there was no way to ever find out. The everyday sonograms were a benefit though. At least she knew it was still alive, it was the only peace of mind she had.

The door opened and footsteps tread inside her room then the door closed behind whoever it was. She kept her face covered as she winced from terrible nausea.

"Erie, we would like to check your fetus now." Pete said as she heard a folder open and papers rustle followed by another person rolling something into the room.

A fetus? "Go fuck your self." She mumbled out from under the blankets.

That had become her new phrase over the past weeks. It tended to ryle up the new people that came in but Pete had grown accustomed to it. He'd frown at her but then go about his business.

“Come on now, today’s the day we see what the gender is. Don’t you want to know?” He said as the sounds of plastic ripping and jelly being squirted out could be heard.

“No.” She lied. She did want to see her pup and know what it was but not here, not now, not with these people.

“We can do this the easy way or the hard way. It’s no trouble to sedate you, you know this. So you can either cooperate and see your baby while you’re awake and livid or never see it. It’s your choice.” Pete said as he waited for her to answer.

Pauk, she didn’t want these assholes looking at her pup, especially if she wasn’t awake to see what was going on. She grunted and rolled over onto her back. Pete smiled at her and the new stranger looked terrified. She’d been here a month and they still acted like she had the bubonic plague.

Pete reached out to open her hospital gown and she slapped his hands away. “I don’t think so.” She barked as she parted her gown, carefully exposing her round belly and making sure her girl parts weren’t showing.

“The technicians going to put some jelly on your skin then use the machine to show images of the baby on this screen.” Pete said as he pointed at the monitor.

“I know how it works, thank you.” She snapped and gestured at the wide eyed technician. “Come on let’s go, I don’t know what you’re waiting for.”

The girl scrambled with the probe and jellied it up then she slathered up Erie with it. It was cold and uncomfortable especially with Pete staring at her like she was a warm apple pie. The girl switched on the machine and the steady rhythmic beating of the pups heart echoed in the room.

It was the most beautiful sound Erie had ever heard. To think that tiny little heartbeat was beating right next to hers was overwhelming. Her eyes watered and tears ran out of the corners of them. She wished Dae’er was here, hell, she wished she was there with him, back home where it was safe and sound and no stupid Pete trying to put his greasy hands on her.

“It looks..” Pete said as he watched the screen. “Are you recording this?” He questioned.

“Yes, sir.” The technician said as she nodded and ran the probe over Eries belly.

“It looks what?” Erie questioned, still unable to see as they had the monitor pointing at their faces.

Pete was ignoring her as his eyes stayed glued on the screen. The technician was also whispering to him as they pointed at her pup. Was this really happening right now? They were going to sit there and make remarks on her pup while she just laid here like an inanimate object. Like hell they were.

Erie raised up a little and her movement caused them to look at her. “What the fuck is going on?” She shouted. “What does it look like and why are you two assholes whispering about it?”

Pete nodded at the technician. “Show her.” He said and Erie laid back down as the woman turned the monitor towards her.

The woman worked the probe until she found the perfect shot of the pup. Erie's heart sailed as soon as she saw that little squirmy baby moving around on the screen. She saw what Pete was talking about now. It had no mandibles, no claws, no scaly skin or dreadlock tresses. It looked human, like a normal human baby with five fingers and five toes. A small endearing nose and a perfect little human mouth. Its eyes fluttered open as it moved, almost like it was looking at her.

Erie cupped her hand over her mouth at the sight of her perfect baby. She would've been happy if it looked Yautja too, she almost wished it would've so it wouldn't be so different back home. She was happy with either one and she was sure Dae'er would be too.

"What is it?" Erie asked, sniffing and wiping away some tears.

"Let me see." The tech said as she pressed with the probe, causing the pup to roll slightly. "It is..." The woman dragged it out and stared at the screen. "A girl."

A girl. She wondered what Dae'er would think about that. She couldn't wait to see what she looked like or feel her soft baby hands on hers. At least something good came from this crappy situation.

"Record it all, mark where the major organs are, the heart, the lungs and any thing out of the ordinary." Pete's words were pissing her off more and more.

He treated Erie like a child or an object, whichever was more convenient for him that day. Now he was treating her pup the same way. Erie would've jumped at him, ripped his throat right out from under his ugly chin but she couldn't. She found it hard to even get out of this shitty bed sometimes.

Ever since they removed her mi flower, she had become so weak. Her flower had done its best to defend itself and her and even managed to take some of them out with it. She cried all day after they brought her back to her room. She felt like she had lost a best friend.

All she had left of her flower were the scabs where its roots used to be. She wondered if Dae'er could get her a new one eventually. Right now, without it, she was essentially crippled.

The tech wiped her belly with a towel then Erie closed up her gown and turned on her side. The tech rolled the machine out, leaving her alone with Pete.

"You think that monster of yours is still coming to get you, don't you?" Pete questioned as he sorted through his papers.

"He is coming and when he gets here, it'll be you he kills first." Erie warned him.

"Is that right? Well, he must be terrible at searching as it's been a month since you arrived." Pete commented.

"I've told you this before, the time back home is slower than the time here. What may be a month for you is only a few hours there. You'll see. He'll come and I'll make sure you're the first asshole he slaughters." She threatened and Pete smirked.

"Well I better go roll out the red carpet and order a cheese plate. Wouldn't want to be rude to our guest." Pete said sarcastically as he picked up his folder and left the room.

She tucked her knees up as comfortable as she could get. She had been praying to Paya and to God that Dae'er would come for her soon. She wasn't as worried about herself anymore as much as she was for their pup. As much as they poked and prodded her, she feared for what they'd do to her little girl.

At some point, Erie had fallen asleep and a loud crashing sound abruptly awoke her. She sat up and looked around the room then tried to get out of bed to go to the door, only to fall on the floor. Pauk her weak body right now. With her missing flower and the growing pup draining her, she couldn't do anything.

She tried to look out the door from where she was but couldn't see crap. It was too dark out there. Someone screamed and more crashing sounds. Her immediate thought was a fire. This hellhole must be up in flames for people to be screaming like that.

The doors outside the ones to her room opened and she saw Pete begin slide an IV holder between the door handles. What in the world was he doing? Once he felt it was secure he came over to her doors and stared at her, a look of fear and worry on his face.

Then it hit her. There was no fire, not literal fire, but a metaphorical one that would certainly burn this place to the ground and then some. She dragged herself to the doors and laughed at Pete.

"I told you he'd come for me. Now I get to watch as your skin becomes a fucking throw rug!" She shouted at him.

All she heard was thunder, loud booming thunder and an ear shattering roar outside the double doors behind Pete. Her stomach felt queasy as she recognized that roar. She began to cry she was so happy to know he was coming for her.

Pete panicked as the thunder got closer and he opened the door to her room then came inside. He reached down to pick her up and she swung at him. That was all of her energy though and his next attempt was a successful one. He lifted her up under her arms and drug her back into in the center of the cell.

She wasn't standing, Pete was holding her up with one arm across her chest, pinning her to his body and the other pulled a scalpel out from his lab coat pocket. Erie was the one panicking now. All that training and conditioning and she was still weak. Unable to defend herself and her pup from Pete.

The clatter of metal drew their attention to the double doors. The IV stand had been cut in two and the door outside her room opened slowly but she saw nothing as it swung closed. Dae'er was cloaked and she knew he was watching them, probably staring at Pete and determining how he'd kill him.

"Dae'er!" Erie shouted. "Dae'er." She sobbed.

Pete shoved the scalpel against her throat, the tip stinging on her skin. "Show yourself or I'll kill her right in front of you!" Pete yelled at the top of his lungs.

Erie struggled against Pete's grasp but it only caused him to drive the scalpel further into her flesh. She whimpered and tears ran down her cheeks as she stopped struggling.

A loud bang hit the glass door and two large spidering impact holes appeared. Pete jumped at the sound as another set appeared right on top of the first ones. Dae'er was trying to break through the glass. Pete was scared but he was still able to hold the scalpel against her throat.

Pete removed the scalpel from her throat and moved it down to her stomach. "That glass breaks and I'll kill both of them!" Pete threatened as he cut a small sliver across Erie's round belly.

The banging stopped and the double doors swung open and closed again, like Dae'er had left. After a few quiet moments, curiosity had Pete walking over to the glass, dragging Erie's feet with him. It was so quiet and still and Erie knew it was the calm before the storm. Pete looked out the glass door, examining the fist holes Dae'er had decorated it with.

Pete moved his scalpel from Erie's belly and tapped it against one of the indentions. As soon as he finished, a familiar bio mask appeared above them and Dae'er looked down at Pete. With one heavy and hard punch, Dae'er broke the glass, shattering it into a million pieces.

Erie covered her eyes and her head the best she could but some of the shards still cut across her skin. Pete still had a hold on her as he backed away over the pieces of glass, frantically trying to get away from Dae'er and dragging her feet across the shards.

Dae'er knocked out the rest of the glass then slowly climbed inside the room, his eyes staring straight at Pete. Erie could hear his growling from the corner of the room and saw him extend his wrist blades as he approached her and Pete.

Pete found composure as he put the scalpel back to Erie's throat. "Don't take another step or I swear to God I'll split her fucking neck in two!" He threatened.

Dae'er stopped and observed Pete. She knew what he was doing, he was planning his attack. Which way would be the safest for her, which one would secure a kill before he could shove the scalpel into her and perhaps even how he could apprehend Pete so that he could torture him later. All of these were possibilities with her male, the last one being the most possible outcome.

Erie looked at Dae'er, wondering what he was thinking. "What do you want?" He asked Pete.

Erie heard Pete swallow and his fingers pressed and lightened against her body, a sign he was nervous about being the one in control. The whole situation was making her nervous and because of it, the pup was nervous. It fluttered around in her quickly, wanting to feel safe again like Erie wanted to.

"You let me go, unharmed, and she goes unharmed as well." Pete requested.

Yeah right, like hell he was going unharmed. If Dae'er didn't gut his ass, she most certainly would. It was quiet a moment as Dae'er thought over his plan.

"Your life for hers." Dae'er said and Pete's body shifted against hers nervously.

"You have to keep your word. It's in your honor code to keep it and breaking it would be disgracing your kind." Pete said as he still kept the scalpel to her neck.

Dae'er rumbled in his chest. "You have my word." He said.

Pete waited a moment, making sure he had made the right choice before yanking the scalpel away from her neck. He let her go and she collapsed to the floor like a pile of wet clothes. He bolted past Dae'er and Dae'er didn't touch him. He came over and lifted her up into a hug, pressing her body against his.

She couldn't believe Dae'er let him go. After everything he did to her, he was getting away. She saw the plasma gun hanging on Dae'er's back and she gathered her strength enough to yank it free from its sheath. She struggled to hold it steady as the reticles lined up with Pete's head. Everything seemed to move in slow motion as she fired the weapon.

Dae'er was pulling her away to see what she was doing, Pete saw her failed attempts to target him and was stopping to look back, all while Erie was pulling the trigger. Time caught up just as Pete's head exploded like the glass door had. Pieces of skull and blood splattered all over the pristine white hall, coating it in a vibrant red.

She dropped the gun and sank against Dae'er's arms. He trilled at her actions. "I said *I* wouldn't kill him." He said but Erie was too tired to even smile up at him.

She buried her face into his chest and inhaled his scent, coating her senses in him. He lifted her up bridal style and everything was a blur. They passed Pete's brain soup as well as other bodies in white coats. Alarms were going off and some of the lights were flickering as they passed under them.

This was it, she was going home. After a month of torture, she was finally going to be safe and sound in Dae'er's arms. Something kept brushing against her arm and she glanced at what was tickling her. Something Dae'er had acquired since she'd been gone, now hung down his chest. She recognized the symbol as one that was used over and over again in her mating marks. She brushed her fingers along it and as she soon as she did, she felt tired.

The lights no longer bothered her, as they seemed to be dimming. The alarms also became quiet and less annoying. Her eyes were heavy and drooped and she fought to keep them open. Dae'er was saying something to her but it sounded so far away, she couldn't understand anything.

They must've left the building because a frigid gust of air stung at her hardly covered skin. She closed her eyes as Dae'er pressed her closer to his warmth. She couldn't open them again, she just felt so tired and Dae'er's burly arms was as comfortable as a warm soft bed.

She hoped when she opened them again that this wasn't a dream. That Dae'er had really come to save her and take her home after waiting for so long. She hoped she never had to lay eyes on Pete or any human for that matter, ever again. Especially after everything that happened with Seleana as well.

No, she'd be just fine with only seeing Yautja for the rest of her life. Her thoughts began to get random as her mind took over her body. When she woke up, she prayed she was safe and sound in her own furry bed.

Dae'er carried No'elia through his clan's citadel and straight to the medical bay. She was alert when he found her but now she wasn't responding to him, even after numerous attempts to stir her. His father's face was the first one he saw when he entered the front of the medical bay.

Dae'er didn't reply to his questions as a worker escorted him through the back. As he had instructed, a room was already prepared. He laid No'elia out on the table and two workers flocked to her quickly. Dae'er watched as they injected her with several items then placed a needle in her arm that was hooked to a bag of yellow tinted water.

The door slid open behind him and Pilo came in, a strange device in his hands. As soon as he parted No'elia's coverings and laid the device on her protruding pup belly, Dae'er charged at him.

He didn't stop his speed as he grabbed Pilo by the throat and slammed him into the wall. He loosened his grip only to shove him against the wall again. He roared in his frightened face and he quickly put his claws up in surrender.

"I only want to check your pup. That's all." He said as Dae'er heaved with anger, breathing through bared fangs and tense mandibles. "Forgive me, I should've explained first. I just wanted to be quick, there's no telling how stressed the pup is. It's vital we be with the utmost urgency for No'elia and the pup's safety." He elaborated a little more and Dae'er released him.

"Explain what every claw on her is doing." He ordered and the startled workers and Pilo all agreed in unison.

It was all overwhelming. He had just got her back from oomans touching her and now more beings were putting their claws on her. As soon as Pilo touched his pup, he lost all control. He was completely on edge. That was his female, his mate, and that was his flesh and thwei growing inside her and seeing someone lay a hand on what's most precious to him, he was ready to kill to protect them.

Pilo held up the small round device. It was some sort of plastic material and had a digital face. "I'm putting in an estimate of how far along she is. This will correct to the right amount and give us an idea of what we can and can not do if the pup is in trouble. It will also give us a heart rate reading and show us what it looks like." Pilo explained and after a moment of registering what he said, Dae'er nodded.

Pilo laid the device on No'elia's small round stomach and the device chirped. "In ooman gestation time, she's about four months. In Yautja, barely a month. By the size of her, it's safe to say the pup is growing via ooman gestation but at a much faster pace. Several hours ago, she wasn't this big, she was barely pregnant." Pilo looked puzzled as his tusks clicked together and he rubbed his forehead in contemplation. "The time difference on the planet she was on must've sped up the gestation time. Without time to think on it, I can't explain why it has but as I've stated this was a trial and the results would be different for everyone. Let's see how the pup is doing." Pilo said as he clicked something on the device and a holographic image of the pup in No'elia's belly appeared above the device.

It would switch from thermal to vivid ooman spectrum. Dae'er walked over to the wriggling pup and like everyone else in the room, stared at it. It didn't look Yautja at all. It was completely ooman like No'elia.

"How can this be?" Dae'er questioned.

"I explained this to you before the procedure. It can either look Yautja or ooman and in this case, the DNA has chosen No'elia's structure." Pilo said.

Dae'er lifted his hand to touch the hologram and right as he went for the tiny little hand, it's eyes shot open, revealing two fiery irises just like his. The workers in the room gasped at them, Pilo was only interested from a doctor's point of view and Dae'er, he was taken aback as well. Oomans eye pigment was never this color. Brown, blue, green and sometimes a mixture but never such a scarlet red.

Dae'er tried to touch it's hand but it was only an image. The pup turned away from Dae'er, revealing its growing black mane. Pilo clicked something on the device again and it's rapid little heartbeat flooded the room. Dae'er felt immense pride from hearing such a strong rhythm coming from his pup. A nice steady and firm heart was what Yautja stood upon through life so hearing it so loudly was amazing to him.

"Ah, it's a lou-dte kale." Pilo's words had Dae'er turning his head towards him.

He didn't like Pilo looking at his pup's genitals but he was a medical Yautja and Dae'er kind of wanted to know what the heir to the throne would be. He only wished No'elia could see their pup swimming around so carefree.

A female. There hadn't been a female heir before, it was always a son that was born first. Even his father was the single male amongst a plethora of sisters. Perhaps his father was right about Paya having a much bigger path planned out after all.